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ABSTRACT

PREACHING FOR CONGREGATIONAL TRANSFORMATION: A
WILLARDIAN VISION-INTENT-MEANS APPROACH TO
SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN
NURTURING THE FAITH OF THE FULLERTON
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

Melbert B. Baga

Adviser: John Brunt

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: PREACHING FOR CONGREGATIONAL TRANSFORMATION: A
WILLARDIAN VISION-INTENT-MEANS APPROACH TO SPIRITUAL
GROWTH AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN NURTURING THE FAITH OF THE
FULLERTON SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Name of researcher: Melbert B. Baga

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Date completed: July 2012

Problem

The preaching diet of the Fullerton congregation has consisted mostly of doctrinal and evangelistic sermons. This is reflective of the kind of preaching one often finds in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This kind of preaching, however, is primarily designed to bring in new believers. It often fails to nurture present members. A different preaching model was needed to address this problem. The present study designed, implemented, and evaluated a preaching module for character transformation utilizing Dallas Willard's vision-intent-means approach.

Method

Six sermons were preached. A survey instrument was formulated consisting of two parts: (a) *Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI)*, which measured the sample population's spiritual maturity on six sub-scales, and (b) *Spiritual Practices Frequency (SPF)*, which measured frequency of practice of eighteen spiritual disciplines. The survey instrument was implemented immediately prior to and after the sermon series. Forty-nine matched surveys were analyzed using T-test paired sample analysis and Wilcoxon signed ranks test. $P \leq .05$ was considered statistically significant positive change.

Results

The sample population showed significant positive change in four of six sub-scales of the SAI. These are: awareness, disappointment, impression management, and instability. SPF showed nine of eighteen categories demonstrating statistically significant positive change (50%). These are: fasting 1, worship 1, prayer, solitude, silence, worship 2, Sabbath, study, and secrecy. All remaining categories (50%) trended positively for change but not of statistically significant value.

Conclusions

The preaching module increased and enhanced the sample population's spiritual maturity and practice of spiritual disciplines. While it may be true to say that every sermon transforms, the strategic use of VIM means that it played a crucial role in the relative success of the preaching module.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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Presented in Partial Fulfillment
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Doctor of Ministry

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For Julie

The Love of my life
Loyalty and sacrifice are your virtues
Without which this study would never
Have seen the light of day

For Micah & Havilah

Daddy's pride and joy
Whose character transformation
I desire to see more than
Anything in this world

To the memory of father
And the joy of my mother

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BAGD</i>	<i>Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i>
<i>DC</i>	<i>Divine Conspiracy</i>
<i>EnBDB</i>	<i>Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon</i>
<i>HG</i>	<i>Hearing God</i>
<i>KGT</i>	<i>Knowing God Today</i>
<i>LXX</i>	<i>Septuagint (Greek) Version of the Old Testament</i>
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis</i>
<i>RH</i>	<i>Renovation of the Heart</i>
<i>SD</i>	<i>Spirit of the Disciplines</i>
<i>SDABC</i>	<i>Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>TWOT</i>	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i>
<i>WBC</i>	<i>Word Bible Dictionary</i>

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them . . . and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

—Jesus Christ, *Matthew 28:19*

We would intend to make disciples and let converts “happen,” rather than intending to make converts and let disciples “happen.”

—Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*

Challenge of the Dissertation

Preaching Malaise

According to Louis Venden, two unique aspects of preaching in the Seventh-day Adventist Church¹ are its emphases on doctrinal distinctive and eschatology.² Doctrinal emphasis “stems from the church’s “conviction of a special mission to call attention in the gospel [doctrines] which have been forgotten, neglected, or overlooked in the general preaching of the Christian church.”³

¹Henceforth, Adventist Church.

²Louis Venden, “A Critical Analysis of Contemporary Seventh-day Adventist Preaching and a Constructive Proposal of Guiding Principles for Homiletical Pedagogy” (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1978), 204.

³Ibid.

Instead of seeing doctrine and eschatology as two separate emphases, perhaps it is better to see them as two sides of the same coin. In this sense, Adventist preaching can be described as primarily doctrinal-eschatological. After all, eschatology—the doctrine of the end-times—is the one unifying point of Adventist theology.⁴ Thus Charles E. Bradford is able to say that true Adventist preaching is always “somewhere in the neighborhood of [the] threefold message” of the three angels in Revelation 14:

Seventh-day Adventist preaching . . . must bring to the presentation those insights and understandings that are found only in the prophetic portions of the Bible. All true Seventh-day Adventist preaching has Revelation 14:6-12 as its frame of reference. As in England all roads lead ultimately to London, so in Adventist preaching and theology, all sermons and doctrines wind up somewhere in the neighborhood of this threefold message.⁵

Adventist preaching is also heavily evangelistic.⁶ Its primary purpose is to bring in new believers into the fold. According to Thomas Peter Ipes, Adventist preaching was “strictly evangelistic” until early in the 1950s. In a Bible Conference held at the Sligo church in September 1952, Melvin K. Eckenroth of the General Conference Ministerial Department, gave the lectures on the state of Adventist preaching and sounded an alarm. Eckenroth emphasized “pastoral preaching ministry and far less upon stricked [sic]

⁴George R. Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs*, Adventist Heritage Series (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 251.

⁵Charles E. Bradford, *Preaching to the Times: The Preaching Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, Ministry Releases (Silver Springs, MD: Ministerial Association General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1993), 13; cf. C. Raymond Holmes, *The Last Word: An Eschatological Theology of Preaching* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987), 55-56.

⁶“Evangelistic” simply means the kind of preaching which seeks converts into the faith. In Adventism, evangelistic preaching often takes the form of gospel presentations couched in the eschatological teachings of Daniel and Revelation.

evangelism.”⁷ He implies that Adventist preachers must do a better job feeding the flock through Christ-centered pastoral preaching.⁸

Venden would reach a similar conclusion some twenty-five years later.

Analyzing thirteen years of the Richards Lectureship (1957-1970), he concluded that no great attention was given to the unique qualities and purposes of pastoral preaching:

“Although Beaven, Alexander, and Loveless underline the need for the preacher to know the people to whom the sermon is addressed, the place of preaching in the Christian growth and nurture is not explicitly considered except for Loveless’s contention that preaching is to train a congregation to think for himself.”⁹

The call for a more pastoral type of preaching is just as evident in Fullerton

⁷Thomas Peter Ipes, “A Historical Survey of Seventh-day Adventist Preaching: Its Background, Growth, and Emphasis” (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1972), no pagination.

⁸Melvin K. Eckenroth, “Christ the Center of all True Preaching,” in *Our Firm Foundation: A Report of the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Conference Held September 1-13, 1952, in the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church Takoma Park, Maryland* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1953), 1, 122. Eckenroth relates: “Some men suggested that the danger lay in an overemphasis on “sheepshearing” [sic] and finances. At that point one of our veteran workers, wise through years of service in Christ, arose and said, “Brethren, I used to raise sheep before I entered the ministry. They taught me many lessons. Among those lessons, I learned that a good wool crop can be produced only on the backs of a well-fed flock; and I further learned that shearing feels good when they are well fed. We must just be sure they are well fed.”

⁹Venden, “A Critical Analysis,” 215, 16. The same could be said of C. Raymond Holmes’s thirteen constitutive attributes of end-time preaching. His eighth and ninth preaching attributes—situational and relational—is one where he says preaching ought to be addressed to people in their life situations, in their aches and pains. This can be done only when there is clear perception of God’s revealed will and awareness of the deeper levels of human existence. Holmes, *The Last Word*, 62.

Seventh-day Adventist Church.¹⁰ It comes from the desire not only for believers to be able to think for themselves but, more importantly, for them to be spiritually transformed to Christlikeness. This requires a preaching diet intended to incrementally grow the believers' faith. Doctrinal and evangelistic sermons, conceived primarily to bring in new believers, fail to move believers beyond the milk of the gospel.

Perhaps this is what Hyveth Williams refers to when she bewails "the large defection of new adherents" and the role of Adventist preaching in this malaise:

Adventist preaching . . . generally focuses on prophecy, evangelistic preaching or personal interpretations of apocalyptic passages which too often ignore the biblical charge for faithfulness to the text, causing one to conclude that ours is not necessarily "biblical" preaching. Because this system has worked for several generations, it has been developed into a state of the art which produces the anticipated numbers of new members . . . in spite of the large defection of new adherents. Consequently, it will be most difficult, if not impossible, to convince the church that it should abandon these outmoded styles of preaching for the more progressive techniques that are in the language capable of engaging the world of the 21st century.¹¹

Preaching for Transformation

Doctrinal and evangelistic preaching's honored place in gospel proclamation doubtless will remain. However, the challenge of the pastor-preacher Sabbath after Sabbath (in the context of Fullerton Adventist Church) is to communicate ways in which believers may enter into a transformational relationship with God in order to deepen their faith. The believer, having been justified must be taught to take the road to sanctification seriously and be given clear guidance all along the way.

¹⁰Henceforth, Fullerton Church.

¹¹Hyveth Williams, "Adventist Preaching Faces 21st Century," in *Adventist Society for Religious Studies Annual Meeting Papers* (1996), 35.

One wonders whether the preacher's failure to provide concrete guidance towards transformation is one reason why people are leaving church. Many people today are "desperate to find spiritual food and drink from their churches" and are increasingly becoming disappointed. There they look for "watering hole[s]" and find them dry.¹² There they seek spiritual depth and find only superficiality.¹³ Dallas Willard's assessment of today's faith seems true: "Faith today is treated as something that only *should* make us different, not that actually *does* or *can* make us different. In reality we *vainly* struggle against the evils of this world, waiting to die and go to heaven. Somehow we've gotten the idea that the essence of faith is entirely a mental and inward thing"¹⁴ (emphasis added).

Preaching must provide a clear and inspiring vision for spiritual transformation. It needs to "clarify and exemplify realistic methods" as a means of grace. It ought to assert "that we *can* become like Christ by doing one thing—following him in the overall style of life he chose for himself."¹⁵ The preacher ought to spearhead the call to holiness and devotion to Jesus Christ in his/her preaching, making sure to communicate that transformation is not a pipe dream, or a pie in the sky. It is a very real possibility to

¹²Julia Duin, *Quitting Church: Why the Faithful are Fleeing and What to Do About It* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 17; for a discussion of the same subject within the Adventist Church, see Fred Cornforth, *Ten Who Left: People Who Have Left the Church and Why* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1995).

¹³Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988), 1.

¹⁴Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1990), x.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, xi.

anyone who partners with God—and here’s how it can be done.

Proclamatory (prophetic) and pastoral (priestly) preaching ought to be transformational in purpose. J. Randall Nichols asserts that there is no distinction between these two types of preaching. Rather, they blend together in one “healing motion.”¹⁶ Preaching is pastoral whenever the dimension, strategy, and subject matter are geared towards the spiritual guidance and transformation of parishioners— heart, soul, mind, and strength. It is prophetic not so much in its content but in the manner in which content paints a true picture of life with God.¹⁷

Preaching must intentionally assist believers on the road to holiness. It must lead the way towards the recovery of passionate spiritual life. To do so, it must re-envision biblical witness on life with God to such an extent that believers may envisage themselves living it. In addition, it must provide the instrumentalities for a successful Christian life. As such, preaching “is not mastering certain techniques but being mastered by certain [theological] convictions.”¹⁸ The theology one has in mind is that of the nature and means of a successful Christian life.¹⁹

¹⁶J. Randall Nichols, *The Restoring Word: Preaching as Pastoral Communication* (San Francisco: Harper&Row, 1987), 65.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 15-17.

¹⁸John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 92.

¹⁹Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 17. Chan’s broad and narrow definition of Spiritual is helpful to the present discussion. He says, “In the broad sense [spiritual theology] refers to a certain way in which all theological reflections ought to be undertaken. In the narrower sense it refers to a distinct branch of theological studies concerned with the principles and practices of the Christian life.”

Dallas Willard's five monographs²⁰ provide a comprehensive and unified account "of the nature and means of spiritual formation in Christ."²¹ While sanctification (just like justification) is an act of God's grace, the believer must choose to engage in "the gentle rigorous process" of inner transformation, without which change is impossible: "Without the gentle rigorous process of the inner transformation, initiated and sustained by the graceful presence of God in our world and in our soul, the change of personality and life clearly announced and spelled out in the Bible, and explained and illustrated throughout Christian history, is impossible."²²

In the Willardian corpus—specifically in *Renovation of the Heart*—one finds the basic pattern for realizing spiritual change in the believer's life. Willard utilizes the basic Alcoholic Anonymous pattern and comes up with VIM—an acronym for vision, intent, and means.²³ In Willard's view, VIM is the necessary pathway towards spiritual transformation without which change is impossible:

A desirable state of being is *envisioned*, and an *intention* to actualize it is actuated in decision. *Means* are applied to fulfill the intention (and the corresponding decision) by producing the desirable state of being. . . . *Any successful plan for spiritual formation, whether for the individual or group, will in fact be significantly similar to the Alcoholic Anonymous program.*

If we are to be spiritually formed in Christ, we must have and must implement the appropriate *vision, intention, and means*. Not just any path we take will do. If

²⁰See Definition of Terms (p. 12) under Willardian Corpus for monograph titles.

²¹Steve L. Porter, "The Willardian Corpus," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 3, no. 2 (2010): 239.

²²Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*, Kindle (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), loc. 1002.

²³*Ibid.*, loc. 1009.

this VIM pattern is not put in place properly and held there, Christ simply will not be formed in us²⁴ (emphasis supplied).

Purpose of the Dissertation

The purpose of the present dissertation is to design and implement a preaching module utilizing Dallas Willard's vision-intent-means (VIM) approach to spiritual transformation as the basic pattern. Sermons will then be assessed for their effectiveness in nurturing the faith of those that participated in the sermon series from the Fullerton Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Justification of the Dissertation

Transformed Believers

A first justification for the present dissertation is the transformation of believers at the Fullerton Church. Paul uses the verb μεταμορφώω (be transformed) twice in his letters. In the first, he utilizes the imperative mood: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed [μεταμορφοῦσθε] by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom 12:2).²⁵ In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul utilizes the indicative mood: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed [μεταμορφούμεθα] into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18).

²⁴Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, loc. 1093, 110.

²⁵Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotes are from the *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*.

Paul's first statement expresses a command. The second is a statement of fact. Both statements are in the passive voice, that is, the subjects (the believers) are being acted upon—they are being transformed. On the one hand, the imperative mood states that transformation is a biblical necessity (which is why believers are exhorted). In addition, the indicative mood asserts that transformation is also a present reality to those that are obedient to the exhortation. On the other hand, the passive voice asserts that the process of transformation is always an act of grace as the subjects (the believers) are acted upon by the verb (transform). God is the agent of transformation, with the believers' full cooperation.

Thus, one may express the desire for transformation among the Fullerton Church members through the imperative and the indicative. Through transformational preaching, believers are exhorted towards sanctification and are given specific guidance all along the way. As the vision is cast and believers increasingly take the challenge, transformation becomes a progressive reality. Such, it is hoped, would be the benefit of the present dissertation to the members of the Fullerton Church.

Transformed Preaching

There exists an earnest desire among local members of the Fullerton Church for direct guidance on how to live an increasingly transformed life—"heart, soul, mind, and strength" (Mark 12:29). Through home visits, counseling, informal talks, and personal observation the present writer has become convinced that Fullerton Church lacks a clear vision for helping its members towards incremental growth. Certainly, the present writer's past preaching reveals a lack of strategic pulpit plan and tactical sermonic plot designed to encourage incremental growth.

Equally apparent is a kind of frustration among church members over the lack of transformation in their own lives. A church member recently expressed his frustration to the present writer over Christianity's lack of teaching relating to growth and transformation. The implication of his statement seems to be that one has to look outside of Christianity to find clear guidance in the matter. When the present writer expressed his certainty in Christianity's ability to teach and guide in matters of transformation, the response from him was that he has not found such teaching and guidance in the Adventist Church!

The typical preaching the Fullerton Church members hear may inadvertently lead to further frustration. When preaching dwells heavily on the hortative, what often gets communicated are the listeners' failures and implied non-compliance to what the preacher thinks "ought" to be clear biblical teachings. The lack of clear sermonic guidance on how to extricate one's self from such complicity—and, more importantly, how to travel on the road through transformation—and frustration is inevitable (perhaps justified!).

The benefit to the present writer, therefore, cannot be overemphasized. Thus a second justification for the present dissertation is transformed preaching, that is, preaching that intentionally guides believers towards incremental growth. Transformed believers presuppose transformed preaching. While there are other avenues for spiritual growth, worship hour preaching on Sabbaths still occupy a favored status among God's people in Fullerton. The preacher remains crucial not only in the initial acceptance of the gospel (Rom 10:14) but also in the ensuing transformation (Gal 4:19, 20).

Definition of Terms

Character Transformation: The reshaping and maturing of one's character to Christlikeness. In the present study, this is used interchangeably with Spiritual Formation.

Incremental Growth: The gradual, progressive, steady, and step-by-step transformation of believers to Christlikeness.

Mysticism: "The conscious experience of the divine presence."²⁶ In the present study, the foregoing definition is expanded to include the conscious experience of the existence of the new creation God has brought into being through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Formation: The process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.²⁷ This definition must include the exploration of "the means by which believers are fostered toward growth in Christ".²⁸

Spiritual Growth: See *Spiritual Formation* above. In the present study, these two terms, along with *Character Transformation*, are treated more or less as synonymous with each other.

Spirituality: [T]he character of our *actual, lived relationship* with God through

²⁶Evan B. Howard, *The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008), 19.

²⁷M. Robert Jr. Mulholland Jr., *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 12.

²⁸Howard, *The Brazos Introduction*, 23.

the Spirit of Christ, as describing our practice of relationship with Christ.”²⁹ In the present study, every reference to spirituality will be to “Christian” spirituality, unless otherwise indicated.

Transformation: A thorough or dramatic change in all areas in the direction of Christlikeness.

Transformational Preaching: The kind of preaching that intentionally inspires and guides listeners towards transformation.

VIM: Acronym for vision, intent, means.

Willardian: Of or relating to Dallas Willard’s thoughts, insights, or approach to spiritual formation.

Willardian Corpus: The body of works by Dallas Willard Consisting of (1) Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God, (2) The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives, (3) The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God, (4) Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ, and (5) Knowing Christ Today: Why We Can Trust Spiritual Knowledge.

Delimitation

The present study is delimited to the Willardian corpus’s outlook on spiritual formation and their application to transformational preaching. References to other works will be made as these contribute toward (1) a clearer understanding of Dallas Willard’s

²⁹Howard, *The Brazos Introduction*, 16.

views, and (2) a theological foundation for and creation of a transformational preaching design.

Methodology

The present study will progress as follows. It begins in chapter 2 by defining the theological underpinnings of transformational preaching, utilizing Dallas Willard's unified concept for spiritual formation as basic framework for biblical analysis. Chapter 3 focuses on designing a transformational preaching model and developing the sermon series, utilizing Willard's VIM as the basic pattern. Implementation and evaluation of the preaching module follows in chapter 4. Summary, conclusion, and recommendations concludes the study in chapter 5.

Implementation of descriptive survey will progress as follows. It is to be implemented immediately before the sermon series at an appointed date and time with the congregation in Sabbath worship attendance. The same procedure will be repeated at the end of the sermon series. The survey questionnaire gathered will then be statistically analyzed for its effectiveness in nurturing the faith of the sample population.

CHAPTER 2

A THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL PREACHING

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose.

—Yahweh, *Isaiah 55:10, 11*

What is amiss with a universe in which reality responds to a word? What is wrong with a universe in which reality responds to thoughts and intensions? Surely we live in precisely such a universe. But our faith does not normally rise to believing it. In part, no doubt, our skepticism comes from the fact that we often speak words unaccompanied by faith and authority.

—Dallas Willard, *Hearing God*

Biblical Vision of the Word

Scripture conveys the power of God's Word (Heb 4:12). The various imageries used complement each other to form a comprehensive view of God's Word. These imageries often express the inspired writer's powerful experiences of the presence of God. Such encounters produce rich metaphors expressive of the transformative power of God's Word. When put together, these provide a kaleidoscopic view of the Word—what it *is*, what it *does*, and *how* it does what it does.

What the Word *Is*

God's Word is the embodiment of His will—His truths, character, purposes, and

purposefulness. It presupposes that God speaks. Peter Adams is right to say that “without God speaking there could be no promise, no covenant, no law, no story, no prophecy, no wise saying, no apocalyptic.”¹ The Scriptures are simply His spoken words written down (Heb 1:1-2). They contain the records of His self-revelation to His people (Gen 35:7, Amos 3:7, Matt 11:27, 16:17).

The term תּוֹרָה (teaching, direction, law) is the embodiment of God’s Word in the Old Testament. It seems an unlikely place from which to build an understanding of the Word. An analysis of its rich biblical usage, however, reveals a fertile ground for analysis. תּוֹרָה gets its basic meaning from the verb יָרָה (throw, shoot, cast)² “with the strong sense of control by the subject.”³ From this basic sense, Scripture deepens and expands its meaning.

Besides its basic sense, תּוֹרָה “designates some divine standard of conduct for God’s people.”⁴ It also carries the sense of a father giving insights and guidance to his child about life in order that s/he may live a long, upright, and blessed life (Prov 3). תּוֹרָה, then, becomes the embodiment of God’s revealed will in all areas of life. “Through the

¹Peter Adam, *Speaking God’s Words: A Practical Theology of Expository Preaching* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 16.

²Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, “יָרָה,” *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (EnBDB)*, electronic ed. (2000), 432.

³In the ancient practice of casting lots, God is the subject that exercises strong direction and control over the activity. The result was understood to reveal guidance and direction from God. John E. Hartley, “תּוֹרָה,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT)*, electronic ed. (1999), 403.

⁴Peter Enns, “Law of God,” *New International Dictionary of the Theology and Exegesis (NIDOTTE)* (1996), 4:893.

law God shows his interest in all aspects of man's life which is to be lived under his direction and care.”⁵ Such conclusion is derived from Scripture's use of תורה itself. Peter Enns notes its diverse use: “The term is not limited to cultic or ceremonial matters, but also includes civil/social law, and eventually the narrative portions of the Pent[ateuch] as well. At times, tôrâ pertains to the words of prophets, and even includes the words of instruction from a father or mother to their child.”⁶

Psalm 119 is a good place to deepen and expand one's understanding of תורה.⁷ The psalm interchangeably uses seven synonymous words. The nuances of each synonym are not defined in the psalm.⁸ However, one can turn to Scripture's larger use to get a better understanding. The seven synonyms are: דְּבָר or דְּבָרִים (word/s), עֲדוּת (covenant terms), מִשְׁפָּטִים (rulings), חֻקִּים (statutes), מִצְוֹת (commands), אִמְרָה or אִמְרוֹ (saying/s), and פְּקוּדִים (charges).

Far from a narrow “legal” understanding, תורה represents the entirety of God's revealed written will to God's people prior to the New Testament. One identifies with the Psalmist's broad vision of תורה: “I have seen a limit to all perfection, but your

⁵Hartley, “תורה,” *TWOT*, 404.

⁶Enns, “Law of God,” *NIDOTTE*, 893.

⁷Here, the Psalmist puts together a tour de force of lament, hymn, and wisdom poem structured to follow the Hebrew alphabet acrostically. It comprises twenty-two strophes, each strophe comprising eight lines. Each line in a strophe begins with the same letter of the alphabet—the first eight with alef (א), the next eight with bet (ב), then methodically on to the last letter tav (ת). The acrostic provides structure, stimulus, and limit. More importantly, it communicates completeness of the Torah, which is the object of the Psalmist's obedience and devotion.

⁸Leslie Allen, *Psalm 101-150*, Word Bible Commentary (WBC) (Dallas: Word, 2002), 21:183.

commandment is exceedingly broad” (Ps 119:96).⁹ Such vision of completeness leads to passionate devotion. As the Psalmist has discovered, in the very breadth of תּוֹרָה lies its depth—its ability to enlarge the depth of one’s being: “I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart!” (Ps 119:32; cf. 18:37).¹⁰

Some of the nuances are worth mentioning. עֲדוּת emphasizes one’s personal obligations in a relationship with God (Ex 16:34).¹¹ The believer is to fully identify and conform with the potential and existential ideals of תּוֹרָה. More poignantly, as Leslie Allen notes, it celebrates the closest relationship between servant and God in a refreshingly non-legalistic way:

There is no hint of legalism in any of its twenty-two strophes, but rather the psalmist expresses self-identification with the potential of the God-given Torah, with its moral and existential ideals. The psalm seeks conformity with the Torah’s expression of the will of God for human life. The poem breathes a spirit of devotion and celebrates the closest relationships between the psalmist as יָדָבֵעַ, “your servant,” and Yahweh as אֱלֹהֵי, “my God.” “It is Yahweh who is the portion of the speaker (v. 57), not the torah nor the keeping of the torah.”¹²

The object of this self-identification is Yahweh himself. With the exception of

⁹From the adjective רָחֵב (large). In this text, מִצְוֹת (commandments) is used synonymously with תּוֹרָה.

¹⁰“Enlarge,” or “broaden.” See Wilhelm Gesenius and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, “חִבֵּר,” *Gesenius’ Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament (GHCLOT)* (2003), 764.

¹¹There seem to be evidence to the effect that בְּרִית (covenant), at least in the Sinai narratives, refer to God’s own binding oath to the agreement with His people. עֲדוּת, on the other hand, refers to Israel’s own obligations to the same agreement. James D. Price, “עֲדָה,” *NIDOTTE* (1996), 3:329.

¹²Allen, *Psalms 101-50*, 184. The last sentence is a direct quote from Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1984), 41.

verses 1-3, 57a, 115, and 126a—six out of one hundred seventy-six verses— the Psalmist speaks directly to Yahweh.¹³ Out of love for God and confidence in His Word, the Psalmist throws heart and soul in passionate devotion and obedience. One gets the sense that the Psalmist makes no distinction between Yahweh’s own person and that of His revelation. His love for Yahweh and the Torah are one and the same.

In the term מִשְׁפָּטִים one sees the Word as an expression of God’s character and, by extension, shows His dealings with His people. His rulings (judicial, legislative, and executive judgments) are just because He is just. The rightness of God’s dealings with His people stem from his basic attribute of מִשְׁפָּט (justice, Isa 30:18, Ps 37:28, 36:6). Thus the “rightness rooted in God’s character, ought to be an attribute of man in general and of judicial process among them”¹⁴ (Mic 6:8).

What the Word *Does*

God’s Word expresses His *vision* for the universe He created (Rom 8:18-25). It conveys His *intent* for its sustenance and renewal (Rom 12:2, Rev 21:5). It reveals the *means* for effecting the transformation He desires in His creation and among His creatures (2 Cor 5:17, Gal 6:15). It communicates His closeness and accessibility—His presence as guidance—to the people He loves (Deut 30:14, Rom 10:8).

All speech *does* things. Going back to Psalm 119, the terms דְּבָר and דְּבָרִים (word/s) express this dynamic character of God’s Word. דְּבָר and דְּבָרִים stress the

¹³Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 84.

¹⁴Robert D. Culver, “מִשְׁפָּטִים,” *TWOT* (1999), 947.

dynamic orality of God's words—that they *do* things.¹⁵ Of especial note is the phrase דְּבַר יְהוָה (the word of the LORD)¹⁶ and its counterpart דְּבַר אֱלֹהִים (the word of God).¹⁷

These introduce “a message from or about God”¹⁸ communicated as an *act* or a counsel and delivered in a vision, dream, or prophecy to accomplish God's purposes.

God's Word, however, contains not only a dynamic but also a dianoetic (thought) element. Often, the two go hand-in-hand to communicate both the content and the orality of the Word:

Only in the Heb. דְּבַר is the material concept with its energy felt so vitally in the verbal concept that the word appears as a material force which is always present and at work, which runs and has the power to make alive.

To the degree that the meaning of a thing is implied in דְּבַר, the whole point is that the word and the thing are co-extensive. Hence the most important attribute of דְּבַר, and of λόγος and ῥῆμα as translations, is truth.¹⁹

The terms אֶמְרָה and אֶמְרוֹת (saying/s) convey the sense of command (Ps 18:31) and promise (Ps 119:38, 50, 103, 140)—also emphasizing their orality.²⁰ Its verbal

¹⁵E.g., דְּבָרִים עָשִׂיתָ, “the ten words,” (Exod 34:28, Deut 4:13, 10:4). Also Josh 22:4 where the verb דָּבַר (Piel perf. 3rd per. sing. of דְּבַר) is translated as “promised.”

¹⁶E.g., Hos 1:1, Mic 1:1, Zeph 1:1.

¹⁷These phrases are not found in Psalm 119. Moreover, they appear sparingly throughout the psalms. Ps12:6 uses the phrase, “the words of the Lord,” Ps 18:30, “the word of the Lord”; Ps 107:11, “the words of God.” Only Ps 33:4, 6 use the phrase. In Ps 56:4, 10 the two words appear in close proximity with each other. All these may be attributed to the practice in the Psalms of directly addressing God in the second person, instead of the third.

¹⁸Frank Ritchel Ames, “דְּבַר,” *NIDOTTE* (1996), 1:913, 14.

¹⁹Otto Procksch, “The Word of God in the Old Testament,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, electronic ed., (1964), 4:93.

²⁰Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “אֶמְרָה,” *EnBDB*, 57.

equivalent אָמַר (say) “is used repeatedly by God to introduce revelation.”²¹ It also frequently refers to God’s creative word, as in the phrase וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים (and God said) in Genesis 1,²² or in the formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (thus says the LORD).²³ The formula is not meant to be magical but finds its dynamism “in God the speaker.”²⁴

The New Testament²⁵ appropriates and expands on this usage through the noun λόγος (word)—along with its verb form λέγω, and the noun ῥῆμα—as the main equivalents of דָּבַר and אָמַר.²⁶ Various formulas are utilized to quote Jesus’ sayings.²⁷ The merging of the dianoetic and dynamic elements of דָּבַר/λόγος coalesce in John’s sublime personification of λόγος through his recollection of Jesus’ “I am” sayings²⁸ and his attribution in John 1:1, 14: “Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ

²¹Charles L. Feinberg, “אָמַר,” *TWOT* (1999), 55.

²²Verses 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, and 29.

²³E.g., Exod 3:15, Josh 7:13, Zech 1:4.

²⁴Feinberg, “אָמַר,” 55.

²⁵Henceforth, NT.

²⁶Procksch, “The Word of God in the Old Testament,” 3:92, 93.

²⁷The sayings are introduced by the following formulas: (1) τὸ ῥῆμα Ἰησοῦ (the word of Jesus - Matt 26:75), (2) τὸ ῥῆμα ὡς εἶπεν . . . ὁ Ἰησοῦς (the word that Jesus spoke - Mark 14:72), (3) τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ κυρίου (the word of the Lord - Acts 11:16), (4) ὁ λόγος ὃν εἶπεν (the word that He spoke - John 18:9), (5) ὁ λόγος οὗτος ὃν εἶπεν (the word that He spoke - John 7:36), (6) ὁ λόγος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ὃν εἶπεν (the word that Jesus spoke - John 18:32), (7) ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου ὡς εἶπεν (the word that the Lord spoke - Luke 22:61), (8) λόγος κυρίου (a word from the Lord - 1 Thess 4:15), (9) οἱ λόγοι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ὅτι αὐτὸς εἶπεν (the words of the Lord Jesus that He himself said - Acts 20:35), (10) ἐπιταγὴ κυρίου (a command of the Lord - 1 Cor 7:25; 7:10, 12—with παραγγέλλω and λέγω). Ibid., 112, 13.

θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος . . . καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. . . . And the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

The personification of λόγος in John's gospel allows for a backward look at Jesus' sayings across the NT.²⁹ In Matthew 13:19, for example, Jesus explains His parable of the sower as "hearing" and "understanding" τὸν λόγον τῆς βασιλείας (the word of the kingdom). Jesus' proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom (Matt 4:23, 9:35, 24:14) becomes a direct invitation to be yoked with Him (Matt 11:28-30): "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

The personification of God's Word means that God's vision and intent for his creation can only be actualized in response to Jesus' personal invitation of becoming yoked with Him. This, perhaps, is the most poignant metaphor for salvation.³⁰ The

²⁸John alone recalls Jesus' "I am" sayings. See John 6:35, 41, 48, 51; 8:12, 14, 18; 9:5; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25.

²⁹Backward in the sense that John's Gospel may have been one of the last NT book to be written. "Matthew," *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1980), 5:180-81.

³⁰"The rabbis used yoke for school as many pupils find it now a yoke. The English word 'school' is Greek for leisure (σχολή [scholē])." A. T. Robinson, *Word Pictures of the New Testament* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), Matthew 11:29; for yoke as a reference to the Torah (see Deut 31:9), see "Matthew," *SDABC*, 5:389; for a Sabbath rest as a metaphor for redemption, see Niels-Erik Andreasen, *Rest and Redemption: A Study of the Biblical Sabbath*, Andrews University Monographs Studies in Religion XI (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1978); Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness: A Theological Study of the*

Living Word—Jesus Christ—calls those who would live in God’s kingdom to “submit to the discipline and training of My way of life.”³¹ The Written and Living Word, therefore, combine to invite all to this way of life.

How the Word Does

Jesus’ words in Matthew 13:19 provide the needed context for determining how God’s Word’s does what it does. His emphasis on “hearing” and “understanding” is a theme that runs clear through the NT. The use the verb ἀκούω (hear) and its derivatives³² demonstrates the significance of hearing the spoken Word as the primary form of God’s revelation and the response that follows hearing.³³ As such, God’s revelation is a message to be proclaimed and heard. NT emphasis, however, shifts from that of teachings (as was the case in the OT) to the events of Jesus’ life.³⁴ Jesus himself puts emphasis on the hearing of faith³⁵ as did his followers after Him.³⁶

Good News of the Sabbath for Today (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1988); George E. Vandeman, *When God Made Rest* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1987).

³¹“Matthew,” *SDABC*, 5:389.

³²Gerhard Kittel, “ἀκούω,” *TDNT*, electronic ed. (1964), 1:216.

³³In the OT and in Judaism, hearing God is the preferred mode of revelation. Seeing God’s face is deemed exceptional and often dangerous (Gen 19:26, 32:31, Exod 3:6, Judg 6:23, Num 12:6). *Ibid.*, 217.

³⁴Note the following “Go and tell” passages. On the events of Jesus’ ministry: Matt 11:4; Luke 7:22; 13:32. On the event of the resurrection: Matt 28:7, 10; Mark 16:7.

³⁵E.g., Matt 11:15; 13:9, 15; 13:16, 43; Mark 4:9, 23; 8:18; Luke 8:8; 14:35.

³⁶E.g., Rom 10:14, 10:17, 11:8; Gal 3:2, 5; Eph 4:29; 2 Tim 4:17; Heb 3:7, 15; 4:7; 5:11; Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 20, 22; 13:9. Cf. Isa 6:9.

The verb συνίημι (understand) is concomitant with the hearing of faith. Insight and understanding of the Word proclaimed “is not a faculty native to man as such.”³⁷ Rather, it is a gift of God which is given to those who seek after it.³⁸ According to Matthew 13:11-13, God gives understanding only to those who are willing to receive the message of Jesus and become His disciples. To those who receive Christ, more understanding will be given. Those who reject the offer from the start, will be unable to penetrate even the most elementary truths of the kingdom.³⁹

God’s Word, when willingly heard and understood, penetrates and increasingly transforms the heart which in turn leads to transformed actions. Understanding is always intricately connected with conduct. Paul’s description of ἀσύνετος καρδιά (a heart without understanding) and in ἀδόκιμον νοῦν (depraved heart)⁴⁰ lead to a life completely abandoned to wickedness. Conversely, the heart increasingly being filled with “understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ,” will walk with Him in newness of life.⁴¹

Biblical Intent for Preaching the Word

God intends His Word to be heard so that it may transform (Rom 10:8-14). Only thus can preaching be transformational in the various ways Scripture describes it. Its

³⁷Hans Conzelmann, “συνίημι,” *TDNT*, electronic ed. (1964), 7:890.

³⁸1 Kgs 3:9; Dan 2:29; Ps 119:34; Matt 7:8; 12:39; 13:12; Luke 11:9-10; 12:31.

³⁹Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1998), 33A:372.

⁴⁰Rom 1:21, 28.

⁴¹Col 2:2. See also Col 3.

very purpose is “not to impart knowledge but to influence behavior—not to inform but to transform.”⁴²

Preaching as Proclamation

The Puritan preacher-theologian Thomas Goodwin said: “God had only one Son and he made him a preacher.”⁴³ This statement rings true biblically. In Mark 1:38, Jesus himself declares at the beginning of his ministry that proclamation is his primary task: “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may *preach* there also, for that is why I came out.” Luke corroborates and qualifies this when he quotes Jesus attesting in a synagogue sermon that his mission is “to *proclaim* good news to the poor . . . to *proclaim* the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18).⁴⁴ In both passages, “preach” and “proclaim” are a translation of the verb κηρύσσω.⁴⁵

No single word can describe the act of preaching. The NT is dynamic in its use of various expressions to describe the act of proclamation.⁴⁶ Even κηρύσσειν—the one term

⁴²Donald R. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming Truth in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 12.

⁴³Michael J. Quicke, *360-Degree Preaching: Hearing, Speaking, and Living the Word* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 19. He cites no reference.

⁴⁴Italics are the present writer’s.

⁴⁵KJV & NKJV use “preach” in both passages. NIV uses “preach” in the former and “proclaim” in the latter; NRSV uses “proclaim the message” and “proclaim” accordingly.

⁴⁶Other words used for proclamation in the NT are: λέγειν (to say), λαλεῖν (to speak), ἀποφθέγγεσθαι (to speak out loudly and clearly), ὁμιλεῖν (to converse), διηγείσθαι (to tell fully), ἐκδιηγείσθαι (to declare), ἐξηγεῖσθαι (to provide detailed information in a systematic manner), διαλέγεσθαι (to discuss with reasonable discourse), διερμηνεύειν (to interpret), γνωρίζειν (to make known). Sometimes: ἀγγέλειν (to bring

that is most often translated “to preach”—does not mean the delivery of a learned and edifying or hortatory discourse in well-chosen words and a pleasant voice” as may have been the case in the Greek κηρύξ (herald). Instead, in its simplest sense κηρύσσω means the proclamation or the declaration of an event in word and deed.⁴⁷ In this, the various expressions find their common ground.

Yet the use of various expressions describing the act of proclamation not only speaks of preaching’s dynamism. It also speaks of preaching’s essentially transformative character. Preaching is not the mere impartation of facts. Rather, it “is an effective force which creates what it proclaims.”⁴⁸ In this sense, preaching is formational—something is formed in the very act of proclamation. Furthermore, preaching is transformational—that which is formed amounts to a renewing, reshaping, and reorganizing of an individual’s constitution and life.

That which is proclaimed is the nearness—that is, proximity, and accessibility of God’s kingdom (Luke 10:9, 11; 19:11; 21:31). In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ one may experience God’s reign. Those that would experience this new

news), ἀναγγέλλειν (to announce), ἀπαγγέλλειν (to proclaim), διαγγέλλειν (to give notice), ἐξαγγέλλειν (to proclaim throughout), καταγγέλλειν (to preach and advocate), εὐαγγελίζεσθαι (to preach the good news), and sometimes παρρησιάζεσθαι (to preach fearlessly), μαρτυρεῖν (to witness), ἐπιμαρτυρεῖν (to bear witness about), διαμαρτύρεσθαι (to testify), πείθειν (to persuade), ὁμολογεῖν (to make an emphatic assertion). Also: κράζειν (to shout), προφητεύειν (to speak inspired utterances), διδάσκειν (to teach), παραδιδόναι (to instruct), νουθετεῖν (to instruct on proper behavior and belief), τὸν λόγον ὀρθοτομεῖν (to expound on the word correctly), παρακαλεῖν (to plead earnestly), ἐλέγχειν (to reprove), and ἐπιτιμᾶν (to rebuke). Gerhard Friedrich, “κηρύσσω,” *TDNT*, electronic ed. (1964), 3:703.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., 711.

reality are enjoined to repent. Repentance, rather than bringing the kingdom nearer, in fact opens it to all who would believe. Through proclamation, Scripture comes alive for “[t]rue proclamation does not take place through Scripture alone, but through its exposition.”⁴⁹

That which is formed is faith. Faith is both trust and belief in God’s experienced acts in history as fully manifested in Jesus Christ.⁵⁰ It is both faithfulness in and obedience to God and His Word. It involves intense emotional dynamics as one’s hopes and expectations are increasingly realized.⁵¹ Faith is given as a gift. It “comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom 10:14). The creation of faith through proclamation is “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” as listeners hang on the preacher’s words as God’s, despite its simplicity and foolishness (1 Cor 2:4).

Transformation comes as proclamation produces faith. In the words of Paul, “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” (Rom 10:14). This faith itself is transformational since it produced in the person new desires for God and God’s vision, which was not there before. It continues to transform by providing impetus for further change. In this, preaching has a vital role. As Paul puts it, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth” (1 Cor 3:6).

⁴⁹Friedrich, “κηρύσσω,” 3:713.

⁵⁰Rudolf Bultmann, “πιστεύω,” *TDNT*, electronic ed. (1964), 6:205.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 199.

Preaching, then, is vital whether in the initial formation of faith, or in the ensuing process of transformation. This is so because preachers are God's messengers who speak His Word. Through those whom God called and sent, the words of the resurrected Christ go on. They speak His Word "in season or out of season" (2 Tim 4:2). "He is present in the word of His messengers, so that preaching is both the Word of God and the word of man, as Jesus, too, is very God and very man."⁵²

Preaching and Reconciliation

Looking into the theme of reconciliation is one way to see the transformational nature of proclamation. Ἀλλάσσειν (to change) and its cognates⁵³ describe the idea of transformation in the NT. The basic meaning of ἀλλάσσω is "to alter," "to give in exchange," or "to change." Paul uses the term twice in 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52 to describe the bodily transformation of believers at the second coming of Jesus Christ.⁵⁴ The cognate verb καταλλάσσω (to change, reconcile) is utilized in 1 Corinthians 7:11 to describe marital reconciliation.⁵⁵ In it, Paul urges the wife to "be reconciled" to her

⁵²Prior to his death, Jesus' commission to preach was limited to "the lost tribes of Israel." Post resurrection, however, this was expanded to include the entire world. See Mark 3:14; Luke 4:18, 43; 9:2; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11. Friedrich, "κηρύσσω," 709.

⁵³For a list of the cognates, see Friedrich Büchsel, "ἀλλάσσω," *TDNT* Electronic ed. (1964), 1:251.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁵The other two places where ἀλλάσσω appears: (a) Rom 1:23 where the word has the sense of "changing the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of the image of corruptible man. . . ." (b) Hebrews 1:12 where the writer uses "change" by highlighting the Son's durability and immutability with the mutability of the created order.

husband, and the husband “not to divorce his wife.”⁵⁶

Inter-human relationships mirror the God-human relationship both in its estranged and reconciled state. The renewal of relationship through reconciliation perhaps best captures the transformation envisioned in the act of proclamation. Preaching proclaims not only the restoration of relationships between God and humanity, but also the flourishing of peace from which transformation is effected. In Romans 5:10, Paul asserts: “For while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.”

In 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Paul repeats this message of reconciliation. Every time he talks reconciliation, God is the subject of reconciliation and humans the object. The point is that whereas a state of enmity existed between God and humanity, through Christ’s death and resurrection God has reconciled the world to himself. The aorist active participle καταλλάξαντος (has reconciled) used attributively in 2 Corinthians 5:18 denotes emphatically that in Christ, God took humanity back to himself! It is a finished act which can be experienced through repentance and ensuing faith. This state of affairs has created a new reality.⁵⁷

⁵⁶In Matt 5:24, Jesus asserts that reconciliation precedes the seeking for divine forgiveness or favor. This seems to be the case with the use of διαλλάσσομαι “to be reconciled to someone.” “Christ insists that men must make things right with their fellow men before they be reconciled with God (see Matt 6:15; 1 John 4:20). The more important obligation takes precedence over one of less importance. Reconciliation is more important than sacrifice.” “Matthew,” *SDABC*, 5:335.

⁵⁷Reconciliation thus parallels justification. For a beautiful weaving together of reconciliation with related NT images, see Brenda B. Colijn, “No Longer Strangers: Reconciliation, Adoption, Peace,” in *Images of Salvation in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 175-95.

Reconciliation's implication to transformation is astounding. Paul asserts in 2 Corinthians 5:17: ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν χριστῷ καινὴ κτίσις (so whoever is in Christ, there is a new creation); τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινὰ (the old has passed away, behold the new has come). The existence of this new creation makes transformation possible. More Poignantly, one might even say that the transformed individual is the new creation.⁵⁸

In Christ, the believer enters a new order of things—a new kind of creation—which is “the [very] basis of the most comprehensive renewal possible for man.”⁵⁹ The newness of which Paul speaks is “what was not there before,” a “wholly different and miraculous thing which is brought by the time of salvation.”⁶⁰ The change he describes is “not merely in the disposition of man or his legal relationship to God, but in the total state of his life.”⁶¹

By utilizing the language of reconciliation, Paul succeeds in painting a relational picture. With the restoration of the estranged God-human relationship, wholeness begins to flourish. The absence of hostility and the healing of wounds create an atmosphere where positive change is possible.⁶² In Romans 5, Paul takes pains to convey that God's

⁵⁸Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, WBC, vol. 40 (Dallas, TX: Word, 2002), 135. He translates 2 Cor 5:17: “So, if anyone comes to be in Christ, there is a new creation; the old order has gone, to be replaced by the new [in every way].”

⁵⁹Friedrich Büchsel, “καταλλάσσω,” *TDNT*, electronic ed. (1964), 1:255.

⁶⁰Johannes Behm, “καινός,” *TDNT*, electronic ed. (1964), 3:449.

⁶¹Büchsel, “καταλλάσσω,” *TDNT*, 1:255.

⁶²Lewis B. Smedes, *Union with Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 74.

legal act of justification took humanity's sin guilt away ushering in εἰρήνη (peace)—שלום. Cornelius Platinga, Jr. captures the richness of שלום in a way that makes one wonder how transformative such a state of affairs must be, when it is operative.

The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight is what the Hebrew prophets call *shalom*. We call it peace, but it means far more than mere peace of mind or a cease-fire between enemies. In the Bible, *shalom* means *universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight*—a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, a state of affairs that inspires joyful wonder as its Creator and Savior opens doors and welcomes the creatures in whom he delights.⁶³

Thus in Romans 5:1 Paul states that peace between God and humans *is* in fact the current state of affairs in this new creation: Δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως (Having been justified therefore through faith), εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν (we have peace with God) διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (through our Lord Jesus Christ).

Preaching for Character Transformation

The Christian enters the place of new creation and becomes part of a movement of total renewal in heaven and on earth. Christ is making all things new (Rev 21:5). To the Christian this means, among other things, the restoration (καταρτίσις—perfection, completion, improvement) of character, or the progress of disciples towards maturity (2 Cor 13:9).⁶⁴ Καταρτίσις suggests “the attainment of religious and moral perfection” without any semblance of perfectionism.⁶⁵

⁶³Cornelius Platinga Jr., *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 10.

⁶⁴Hapax legomenon. Paul uses the verbal form καταρτίζω (restore) in v. 11.

⁶⁵It seems clear that in 2 Cor 13:9 Paul also has in mind “the restoration and repair of what has been broken” not the least of which is the relationship between Paul and the

τέλειος (complete) is most often used in Scripture to describe God's ideal for His children. Interestingly, Scripture's use of τέλειος is devoid of any semblance of absolute perfection. Used in the LXX to translate תָּמִיךְ and תָּשׁוּבָה (complete), τέλειος describes a person who is completely devoted to God and has an "undivided" heart (Gen 6:9; Deut 18:13; 1 Kgs 8:61; Job 1:1, 9:21-22, 12:4; Ps 101:2).⁶⁶

The completeness which τέλειος envisions is one where the heart becomes wholly devoted to loving God and neighbor (Luke 10:27; cf. Matt 5:48). This seems to be at the heart of Jesus' challenge to the rich young ruler (Matt 19:13-22). In order to participate in God's kingdom, one must rise above simply obeying commandments to one of uninhibited loyalty (cf. Matt 8:22; 10:38-39; 16:24-26).⁶⁷

The heart's divided loyalty prevents one from fully committing to God. If one is to live in newness of life in the new order of creation (Rom 6:4), One must ask the question, πάντα ταῦτα ἐφύλαξα (what do I still lack?). Then one must listen for Jesus' answer, εἰ θέλεις τέλειος εἶναι (if you wish to be fully committed). . . . The goal is to be so disciplined by Christ as to become like Him: "A disciple is not above his teacher, but

Corinthian church is a result of "the intrusion of a rival mission" (see 2 Cor 11:4, 13-15. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 484.

⁶⁶That the OT does not envision a perfected state of sinlessness in תָּמִיךְ is evident by the fact that the persons said to be "complete" or "blameless" are themselves not wholly free from sin. Cf. Gen 9:21-23 (on Noah) and Job 7:20-21; 9:2, 15; 10:6; 14:16-17 (on Job). In the case of תָּשׁוּבָה, the completeness described is one of a quality (an attitude) of the heart. Cf. 1 Kgs 8:61; 1 Chr 28:9. See Lloyd G. Carr, "תָּשׁוּבָה," *TWOT*, Electronic ed. (1999), 931; J. Barton Payne, "תָּמִיךְ," *TWOT*, electronic ed. (1999), 974.

⁶⁷Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 558.

everyone when he is fully trained [κατηρτισμένος]⁶⁸ will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40; Gal 4:19; Rom 8:10).

Preaching must explicate Jesus’ vision for Christian perfection. Believers are to go through a process of discipleship en route to a united and mature faith, with Jesus Christ serving as both the example *par excellence* and the ultimate goal of faith. Indeed, Paul’s are equally true to preaching as to other gifts of the Spirit, to other functions of ministry:

[T]o equip [καταρτισμόν, to fully prepare] the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.⁶⁹

The primary sense of καταρτίζω in Luke 6:40 is to “put in order, restore” either as restoring something to its former condition (Matt 4:21, Mark 1:19), or as completing something by supplying what is lacking (1 Thess 3:10, Heb 13:21, 1 Cor 1:10, 2 Cor 13:11).⁷⁰

Certainly, the full range of New Testament expressions on proclamation is adequate to demonstrate just how preaching can be utilized to “restore” or “perfect” a believer into Christlikeness. Perhaps Colossians 1:28 suffices for an example. Here, three related terms appear, the last two qualifying the first. The three words are “proclaim,” “warning,” and “teaching.” Paul says, “It is he whom we proclaim

⁶⁸Perf. pass. ptcp. (nom. masc. sing.) form of καταρτίζω.

⁶⁹Eph 4:12-14. Cf. John 13:15; 1 Tim 1:16, 4:14; 1 Pet 2:21.

⁷⁰William Arndt and others, “καταρτίζω,” *BAGD*, electronic ed. (1979), 417.

(καταγγέλω), warning (νουθετούντες) everyone and teaching (διδάσκοντες) everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.”

Proclamation as instruction for righteousness has strong biblical support. In the LXX, διδάσκω describes the education of the whole person in the revealed will of God.⁷¹ The New Testament makes διδάσκω as one of Jesus’ most prominent ministry functions. Jesus carried out his teaching ministry primarily to instruct and direct his disciples—a practice which was not lost to the disciples after Jesus’ departure to heaven. Proclamation-as-teaching became an internal function of the Christian church (2 Thess 2:15, Col 2:7, Eph 4:21; cf. Rom 12:7).⁷²

Biblical Means for Preaching the Word

Scripture’s vision for transformation through the proclamation of the Word leads to a discussion of Willard’s vision-intent-means (VIM).⁷³ VIM appears in chapter 5 of *Renovation of the Heart*. Capitalizing on its dictionary definition,⁷⁴ Willard uses “vim” to encapsulate “*the general pattern that all effective efforts toward personal transformation—not just Christian spiritual formation—must follow.*”⁷⁵ Borrowing from Alcoholic Anonymous’ “twelve step” program, he explains the philosophy behind the

⁷¹Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, “διδάσκω,” *TDNT*, electronic ed. (1964), 2:137.

⁷²The appearance of νουθετέω in Col 1:28 is significant since the church’s ministry of proclamation took a more pastoral note as it spread and spawned many house churches.

⁷³Henceforth, VIM.

⁷⁴Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, loc. 1109.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, loc. 1064.

pattern: “A desirable state of being is *envisioned*, and an *intention* to realize it is actuated in decision. *Means* are applied to fulfill the intention (and the corresponding decision) by producing the desirable state of being: in this case abstinence from alcohol and a life of sobriety with all that entails.”⁷⁶

VIM is the hub that holds together Willard’s views on spiritual formation. It has a clearly defined *vision*, *intent*, and *means* in mind. As such, it is a useful guide for systematic analysis of his writings. Moreover VIM, simple as it is profound, is capable of adaptation into other areas of Christian disciplines—preaching included—where transformation is the goal. The present section analyzes VIM’s usefulness to preaching.⁷⁷

Vision and Preaching

A well known author illustrates the power of vision by asking his readers to imagine attending their own funeral. Looking at their tombstone, he asks his readers to write their own epitaph expressing their legacy. He then challenges his readers to look back and live as though their legacy is already etched on a tombstone.⁷⁸ Life becomes transformative in the presence of a clear and strong vision, as Willard illustrates:

Now this is the *vision* that goes into the particular project of learning the language. Unless one has it—or, better, it has them—the language will pretty surely not be learned. . . . The presence of such a vision explains why . . . the English language is learned at a phenomenal rate all around the world. Multitudes see clearly the ways in

⁷⁶Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, loc. 1088-3820.

⁷⁷The point of VIM is not so much to use any vision, but to use the one vision as the basis for intention and action.

⁷⁸Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (audiocassette) (Provo: UT: Franklin Covey).

which their life might be improved by knowledge of English. If the vision is clear and strong, it will very likely pull everything else required along with it.⁷⁹

VIM's vision emphasis is of great value to preaching. Vision does "pull everything else required along with it." It informs *how* and *what* one preaches. Vision is preaching's primary concern. Sermon structure, form, and delivery—whether preaching should be topical, biblical, or expository; pastoral, prophetic, or eschatological—are secondary concerns.⁸⁰

VIM's vision can be characterized as "spiritual theology," instead of "preaching theology."⁸¹ The former delves into the how-to of spiritual growth; the latter with preaching's *raison d'être*. To assume VIM's type of vision for preaching means to go beyond practical theology to practical spirituality. Preaching is servant of the Word precisely because it is "capable of pointing to *holy lives* through which we can rightly see the reality that has made the Scriptures possible."⁸²

The one biblical vision that promises transformation is the formation of character

⁷⁹Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, loc. 1074.

⁸⁰These, of course, are appropriate concerns in and of themselves. The present writer's point is simply that these aren't preaching's most basic concerns. Biblical proclamation encompasses all these and leaves room for its dynamic expressions in different circumstances.

⁸¹See also chap. 1, footnote 18 (pp. 6, 7) for a definition of spiritual theology. see also chap. 2 "What Is Spiritual Theology?" in Diogenes Allen, *Spiritual Theology: The Theology of Yesterday for Spiritual Help Today*, Kindle ed. (Lanham, MD: Cowley Publications, 1997).

⁸²Stanley Hauerwas, *Unleashing the Scripture: Freeing the Bible from Captivity in America* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 37.

to embody that of Christ's.⁸³ From the beginning of the Christian church this has been variously described as “the vision of God, the vision of the Trinity, union with God, participation in God’s life and being.”⁸⁴ This is also *the* vision behind VIM:

The vision that underlies spiritual (trans) formation into Christlikeness is . . . the vision of life now and forever in the range of God’s effective will [i.e., God’s kingdom]—that is, *partaking* of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:1-2) through the birth “from above” and *participating* by our actions in what God is doing now in our lifetime on earth. . . . What we are aiming for in this vision is to live fully in the kingdom of God and as fully as possible *now* and *here*, not just hereafter.⁸⁵

Appropriating this vision for preaching constitutes a return to the historic view of the gospel.⁸⁶ As discussed in the previous section, the basic content of NT gospel proclamation is the proximity and accessibility of God’s kingdom rule through faith reliance in the person of Jesus Christ. Repentance is the avenue of entrance ushering in

⁸³As such, “Character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings. . . . In every generation and in every land the true foundation for character building have been the same. The divine law, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; . . . and thy neighbor as thyself’ (Luke 10:27), the great principle made manifest in the character and life of our Saviour, is the only secure foundation and the only sure guide.” Ellen G. White, *Education* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1903), 225, 27.

⁸⁴Allen, *Spiritual Theology*, 205; cf. Ellen G. White, “Union with God through Christ,” in *Manuscript Releases Volume 5* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1992), 365. “Complete union with Christ and with one another is absolutely necessary to the perfection of believer. Christ’s presence by faith in the heart of believers is their power, their life. It brings union with God.”

⁸⁵Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, loc. 1121-35.

⁸⁶Willard is concerned over the widespread lack of behavioral and psychological transformation in those who profess Christian commitment. He sees the problem as stemming from misunderstandings of the gospel message as simply the removal of sin-guilt or structural evils (social sins). With the removal of character transformation from the heart of the gospel, Christians are alienated from their Master’s kind of life. They are left with no effective means to bridge the gap between faith and life. See chap. 2, “The Gospels of Sin Management” in Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1998), 35-60.

divine pardon, resulting in a new status and a new passion for kingdom life.

To accept VIM's vision is to see salvation as a dynamic union with Christ stretched across one's lifetime. As the result of *justification*, one can say: "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but *Christ lives in me*" (Gal 2:20a). This union creates intense desire to be like Him in all areas of being and of life (*sanctification*): "And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20b cf. John 17 where Christ prays for his disciples' sanctification); "For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil 1:21). It gives one hope for future *glorification*: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (1 Col 1:27; cf. Phil 3:10).⁸⁷

Preaching then becomes a powerful voice for holiness—inspiring, guiding, directing. It bridges "the sanctification gap" which exists among many Christians due in large measure to a theological turn towards a "bar-code faith"⁸⁸ where "[l]ife, our actual existence, is not included in what is now presented as the heart of the Christian message, or it is included marginally."⁸⁹ VIM's vision becomes an impetus for change in preaching so that it can be a powerful voice to address what Richard Lovelace calls "a

⁸⁷Justification, sanctification, and glorification are classic Protestant theological terms describing the entire length of salvation. See pt. 10, "Salvation," in Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998), 901-1034; cf. chap. 10, "The Experience of Salvation," in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 133-47; also Richard Rice, *Reign of God: An Introduction to Christian Theology from a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1997), 265-87.

⁸⁸Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 36.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 41.

peculiar conspiracy somehow to mislay the tradition of spiritual growth and to concentrate on side issues.”⁹⁰

Intent and Preaching

According to Willard, “[t]he vision of life in the kingdom through reliance upon Jesus makes it possible for us to *intend* to live in the kingdom as he did.” If one truly believes in this vision, one can decide to act on it. To Willard, vision is the driving force of intention: “Concretely, we intend to live in the kingdom of God *by* intending to obey the precise example and teachings of Jesus Christ. . . . To think otherwise is to indulge a widespread illusion that now smothers spiritual formation in Christlikeness among professing Christians and prevents it from naturally spreading worldwide.”⁹¹

The first crucial point of VIM’s *intent* is the assertion that what one intends rises from what one truly believes. Vision is the driving force of intention. As such, it is “a mental impossibility”⁹² to not intend one’s genuine vision. To *intend* something is to *decide* to do it. The two are inseparable. This resolve can only come when one has a clear and compelling vision which moves one to act. “[T]he robust intention, with its

⁹⁰Richard Lovelace, “The Sanctification Gap,” *Theology Today* 29, no. 4 (1974): 364-65. Lovelace relates his own search for a deeper life and Protestantism’s general ignorance of their own heritage on spiritual growth: “I was amazed to find that most Protestants were ignorant of the body of tradition which seemed to me to be the living heart of the Reformation heritage. . . . There seemed to be a sanctification gap among Protestants, a peculiar conspiracy somehow to mislay the tradition of spiritual growth and to concentrate on side issues. ‘Liberals’ sought to commend Christianity to its cultured despisers, and to apply ethics to social concerns. ‘Conservatives’ specialized in personal witnessing activity, sermons on John 3:16, and theological discussion of eschatological subtleties.” Adventism has not been spared from this gap.

⁹¹Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, loc. 1135-47.

⁹²*Ibid.*, loc.1147.

inseparable decision, can only be formed and sustained upon the basis of a forceful vision.”⁹³

The second crucial point of VIM’s *intent* is the assertion that true intention leads to action. “If the genuine intention is there, the deed reliably follows. But if it is not there, the deed will most likely not be there either.”⁹⁴ Just as one *can* intend one’s vision, so one *can* also act on one’s intention. The seed of character formation is planted in vision, germinates in intention (or decision), and flowers in action.

One sees in VIM’s *intent* the birth of transformational action. The *means* (as discussed in the next sub-section) simply refer to the ways in which purposeful action seeks actualization of the vision. According to Willard, “it is the vision of life in God’s kingdom and its goodness that provides an adequate basis for the steadfast intention to obey Christ.” He says further: “The really good news for humanity is that Jesus is now taking students in the master class of life. . . . It is about living now as his apprentice in kingdom living, not just as a consumer of his merits.”⁹⁵

Willard clearly answers the *why* of obedience. The emphasis on apprenticeship makes it clear that the goal of transformation is only partly to enter the kingdom. Once in it, one must learn to thrive or one will not long remain in it. To thrive in it, the damages sin has caused to one’s personality must be dealt with after the guilt of sin has been lifted. The ultimate goal is to fully experience the intimate presence of God now and forever.

⁹³Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, loc. 1159.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, xvii.

Thus, to obey Jesus' words and follow his examples now is to rely fully on him to show the way towards a renovated soul so that one may fully participate in God's life.

Such an understanding of the gospel is as beautiful as it is powerful. It creates the kind of *intent* that can transform.

Means and Preaching

With the vision and intention to obey firmly in place, one turns to the *how* of obedience as Willard sees it. This turn towards obedience breathes new life into what is often stale and uninspiring discussion about discipleship and obedience. Willard asserts that "[t]he disappearance of Jesus the teacher explains why today in Christian churches—of whatever leading—little effort is made to teach people to do what he did and taught."⁹⁶ He thus put the endemic problem of lukewarm faith squarely on the backs of theologians and preachers:

The situation we have just described—the disconnection of life from faith, the absence from our churches of Jesus the teacher—is not caused by the wicked world, by social oppression, or by the stubborn meanness of the people who come to our church services and carry on the work of our congregations. It is largely caused and sustained by the basic message that we constantly hear from Christian pulpits. We are flooded with what I have called "gospels of sin management," in one form or another, while Jesus' invitation to eternal life now—right in the midst of work, business, and profession—remains for the most part ignored and unspoken.⁹⁷

Eight years prior to this statement, Willard had already identified where the problem of lack of growth mainly comes from. His conclusion is sobering to the preacher whose main task is to help transform the faithful devotees of Christ:

⁹⁶Willard, *Divine Conspiracy*, 57.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, xvii.

If the steady, longtime faithful devotees to our ministries are not transformed in the substance of their lives to the full range of Christlikeness, they are being failed by what we are teaching them.

For serious churchgoing Christians, the hindrance to true spiritual growth is not unwillingness. While they are far from perfect, no one who knows such people can fail to appreciate their willingness and goodness of heart. For my part, at least, I could no longer deny the facts. I finally decided their problem was a theological deficiency, a lack of teaching, understanding, and practical direction. And the problem, I also decided, was one that the usual forms of ministry and teaching obviously do not remedy.⁹⁸

A serious turn towards discipleship requires an equally serious re-evaluation of the gospel one preaches—or, at least, one’s understanding of it. Willard challenges the preacher to ask: “Does the gospel I preach and teach have a natural tendency to cause people who hear it become full-time students of Jesus?” He urges one to “develop a straightforward presentation . . . of the reality of life now under God’s rule” free of “deadening legalisms, political sloganeering, and dogmatic traditionalisms long proven by history to be soul-crushing dead ends.”⁹⁹

This gospel re-evaluation requires the preacher to develop deeper understanding of what constitutes true obedience. This means that s/he must develop a thoroughgoing theological understanding and practical insights on how one might do what God says beyond behavior modification. Willard thinks that functional obedience alone is counter-productive:

[E]ven if one was to do all the particular things God wants and explicitly commands us to do, one might still not be the person God would have one to be. It is always true that “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor 3:6). An obsession merely with

⁹⁸Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 17.

⁹⁹Willard, *Divine Conspiracy*, 58-59.

doing all God commands may be the very thing that rules out *being* the kind of person that he calls us to be.¹⁰⁰

In order to truly obey, one “must aim to become the *kind of person* from whom the deeds of the law naturally flows.” In obeying, one makes “the decision and settled intention, carried into practice, to become good, ‘righteous,’ *on the inside*—in the hidden dimensions of the self that make up human character—not just in action or outward behavior.”¹⁰¹ This can only happen within a loving relationship with God¹⁰² properly guided “with knowledge and with the truth and evidence knowledge involves.”¹⁰³ The knowledge Willard has in mind is one of “*firsthand interaction*—knowing by acquaintance—direct awareness of him and his kingdom.”¹⁰⁴

A turn towards obedience, therefore, is partly a turn towards the spiritual disciplines as one seeks to become the kind of person who would obey. Willard develops the concept of training “off the spot” as a necessary prelude to obedience because in one’s damaged personality, one often cannot readily obey “on the spot.” The search for

¹⁰⁰Dallas Willard, *Hearing God Today: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 11. Cf. M. Robert Mulholland Jr., “Being and Doing,” in *Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation* (Nashville, TN: The Upper Room, 1985), 95-105.

¹⁰¹Dallas Willard, *Knowing Christ Today: Why We Can Trust Spiritual Knowledge*, Kindle ed. (New York: HarperCollins e-books, 2009), 151.

¹⁰²Willard, *Hearing God Today*, 12.

¹⁰³Willard, *Knowing Christ Today*, 2.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 141.

and application of means is motivated by the desire to heal the damages within, which enable one to obey in real life.¹⁰⁵

VIM's message of character transformation is as old as the gospel itself. Its lofty conception of kingdom life with its concomitant heart-obedience echoes Protestantism's classic concerns for holiness. Adventists share in this desire for holiness, for bridging the sanctification gap, and for becoming like Christ in character.¹⁰⁶ In VIM, one not only recovers this passion for Christian holiness; one also finds fresh and pertinent theological and practical guidance for its present realization. Obedience has never looked so good!

¹⁰⁵Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, loc. 1191.

¹⁰⁶In Adventism, the desire for holiness often finds its impetus from the proclamation of the gospel truth of salvation by grace and its concomitant obedience of faith, which was done at the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference annual meetings. In relation to this message, Ellen G. White states, "The uplifted Savior is to appear in His efficacious work as the Lamb slain, sitting upon the throne, to dispense the priceless covenant blessings, the benefits He died to purchase for every soul who should believe in Him. . . . The message of the gospel of His grace was to be given to the church in clear and distinct lines, that the world should no longer say that Seventh-day Adventists talk the law, but do not each or believe Christ." Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1923), 92; for a historical review of these epochal meetings, see chapters 11-17 of LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971), 188-299; for a simple questions-and-answer presentation of 1888' history and significance, see George R. Knight, *A User-Friendly Guide to the 1888 Message* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1998); cf. George R. Knight, "What Is Christian in Adventism? (1886-1919)," in *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 90-127.

CHAPTER 3

TRANSFORMATIONAL PREACHING DESIGN

AND DEVELOPMENT

These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also.
—Jews of Thessalonica, *Acts 17:6*

We will know power has returned to the pulpit when and where preaching effects transformation in the lives of people and in the structures of society.
—Fred Craddock, *As One Without Authority*

Transformative Preaching Design

The term “design” as it pertains to the present section heading has to do with the model of transformational preaching the present writer is proposing. Three concerns are discussed below: (1) a working metaphor that describes the entire sermon-making process, (2) the creation of the sermon’s goal, and (3) the creation of the sermon’s basic structure. These are deemed necessary to describe in order to give the reader an understanding of the second section of the present chapter dealing with the actual development of the preaching module.

Preaching as Bridge-Building

In the process of sermon making, exegesis forms the first part. Design forms the second part “when the preacher makes the turn from the exegesis of the biblical text toward the sermon itself.” The entire preaching process from exegesis to sermon delivery

has been described as bridge-building. The goal is “the conveying of a God-given message to living people who need to hear it.” More specifically, it is “to enable God’s revealed truth to flow out of the Scriptures into the lives of the men and women today.”¹ John R. W. Stott explains his metaphor in this manner: A “bridge is a means of communication between two places which would otherwise be cut off from one another by a river or a ravine. It makes possible a flow of traffic which without it would be impossible.”²

In Stott’s metaphor, one may imagine Scripture on one end and the congregation on the other end of the bridge. Traffic flow, however, is two-way, not one. The preacher, belonging on the congregation’s side of the bridge, crosses as their representative over to Scripture’s side and ruminates there. S/he takes the congregation with her/him in spirit and, through exegesis, engages in “a conversation between the biblical text and the whole congregation.” The conversation results in an encounter between the congregation and Scripture. This forms the basis for the sermon as the preacher crosses back to the congregation.³

What the preacher takes with her/him is not just the experience of the encounter,

¹Thomas G. Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1989), 78.

²Stott, 137-38.

³The “two-way traffic flow” is the present writer’s extrapolation of Stott’s bridge analogy. Long expresses his concerns over one-directional exegesis. Thus, a two-way traffic flow seems to be the best way to imagine the bridge metaphor. Ibid., 138.

or the recreation of the journey and joy of discovery.⁴ Most importantly, the preacher pronounces what God through His Living Word wishes to *say* and *do* to and with the congregation. Thomas G. Long clearly defines the preacher's task from text to sermon in this way: "This is what the preacher should bring from text to sermon: the claim of the text, the intention of the text to say and do something to and with the hearers. The preacher has witnessed this in the exegesis and now bears witness to it in the sermon."⁵

Transformative Vision-Intent

The preacher's task as Long describes it above makes VIM relevant to the very process of sermon making. In the previous chapter of the present study, it has been noted that VIM provides preaching with the overarching vision of character transformation as it aligns itself with Scripture's goal of full integration into God's kingdom life. VIM's usefulness to preaching now extends to the very creation of sermons. This is precisely because, as noted in the previous chapter, preaching's transformative goal is essentially the same as VIM's.⁶

⁴Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 79.

⁵Ibid., 81-82; cf. H. M. S. Richards, *Feed My Sheep* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 19. Long's view of preaching dovetails Richards's: "Preaching is not primarily arguing about something, commenting about something, philosophising about something, or weaving speech into a beautiful tapestry of sound. Preaching is bearing witness, telling something that we know to people who want to know or who ought to know, or both. That's why preaching is bound up with personality. There never can be preaching without a person, without a preacher. There can never be witnessing without witnesses."

⁶In keeping with the "bridge" analogy, VIM is useful both in the rhetorical analysis of biblical text as well as in the sermonic structure. Thus, VIM is useful both sides of the bridge.

That a sermon has a goal is a truism. In classic homiletic parlance this is expressed in the main idea. The preacher extracts from a biblical text its main theological idea, or truth. Exegesis aims for that one “pregnant” sentence expressing one main thought. This is then sub-divided into various parts forming the sermon’s outline. This outline gives the sermon its structure and movement, which traditionally had been mostly deductive.

The New Homiletic has rightly called into question the traditionally deductive and linear logic which one-idea-preaching has produced.⁷ While exponents of New Homiletic disagree among themselves with whether a sermon ought to have one idea at all, their common concern for intuitively replicating the joy of exegetical discovery is well taken. One agrees that the preacher must replicate the same experience in exegesis as in the actual sermon.⁸

Long believes that a solution ought to have a “focus” and a “function.” Deriving from speech-act hermeneutical insights of Scripture, Long correctly sees texts as not simply repositories of ideas which one extracts. Perhaps equally important is the fact that

⁷Long describes the listeners’ difficulty with linear logic in this way: “[W]hile people can listen in linear fashion, they do not often find it very interesting to do so. Moreover, idea-centered sermons are prone to communicate, over time, that the Christian faith itself can be boiled down to a set of concepts to which people are supposed to give assent. The gospel thus gets presented as a list of propositions, and sermons become didactic devices for explaining these truths and how each of them logically connects to the others.” Long, *Witness*, 80.

⁸For a brief survey of the situation which gave rise to this movement, see Thomas G. Long, “What Happened to Narrative Preaching?” *Journal for Preachers* 28, no. (2005): 9-14. This article also surveys the present scene some thirty years after the movement’s rise. See also “Introduction: The Pillars of the New Homiletic,” in *Renewed Homiletic*, ed. O. Wesley Allen Jr. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press), 1-18.

these texts contain divine intentions for doing something in order to shape the community of faith.⁹

On the one hand, the sermon's *focus* is its "main idea"—what the sermon aims to *say*. The *function*, on the other hand, points to what the sermon aims to *do*. Both are taken from the text of Scripture one preaches from. Haddon W. Robinson's rough equivalent to Long's focus and function are his "sermon idea" and "purpose," respectively. He uses the analogy of an arrow and a target to distinguish one from the other: "A purpose differs from the sermon idea . . . in the same way that a target differs from the arrow; as taking a trip differs from studying a map; as baking a pie differs from reading a recipe. Whereas the idea states the truth, the purpose defines what that truth should accomplish."¹⁰

The sermon's *function* highlights the influence of rhetoric and rhetorical criticism to preaching. It puts into practice rhetorical criticism's insight that words are fundamentally functional.¹¹ In the sermon's function, one attempts "to accomplish what the [biblical] text seeks to accomplish." In this way, rhetorical criticism "stands at the service of preachers both in the way it helps us identify the purpose of a passage and by

⁹Long, *Witness*, 80.

¹⁰Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 107; cf. Brian Chapel, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 40-44. Here, Chapel's "fallen condition focus" is an innovative equivalent of Long's "focus" and Robinson's "purpose."

¹¹See Bruce E. Shields, "The Gospel as Performative Speech," in *From the Housetops: Preaching in the Early Church and Today* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000), 101-10.

drawing our attention to a passage's use of language."¹²

Rhetorical criticism's emphasis on the persuasive use of language helps preaching. Rhetoric helps preaching first by dissecting the different elements of language for persuasion. Second, it helps by analyzing the structure and flow of a biblical text's argument and the concomitant relationship between speaker (writer), audience, and argument. Third, it helps by describing how a biblical text persuades today's listeners.¹³

Scripture, in its many genres, seeks to persuade.¹⁴ Its persuasive power comes from the truthfulness of its claims. Perhaps more poignantly, "[t]ruth has the power to generate a persuasive articulation."¹⁵ The rhetorical components of *saying* and *doing*, however, are inseparable. Separating the sermon's main idea from its function thus creates an artificial distinction. If the rhetorical function of a biblical text is singularly

¹²Gustavo Martin-Asencio, "Hallidayan Functional Grammar as Heir to New Testament Rhetorical Criticism," in *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture: Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference*, ed. Stanley Porter and Dennis L. Stamps, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 93.

¹³Robert Kysar and Joseph M. Webb, *Preaching to Postmoderns: New Perspectives for Proclaiming the Message* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 90; cf. David S. Cunningham, "Rhetoric," in *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation*, ed. A. K. M. Adam (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000), 224.

¹⁴George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 3. Kennedy's definition of rhetoric as "that quality of discourse by which a speaker or writer seeks to accomplish his purposes," is applicable to the rhetorical study Scripture.

¹⁵Dale Patrick and Allen Scult, "Rhetoric and Ideology: A Debate within Biblical Scholarship over the Import of Persuasion," in *Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 66.

contained in what it seeks to say *and* do, then one's sermon statement ought to reflect this singularity.¹⁶

Instead of separate focus and function statements, there ought to be single statement expressing a biblical text's rhetorical goal—what it *says* it intends to *do*. Here, VIM's concept of *vision* and *intent* come in handy. What a text intends to do rises from its vision of what needs to be done. God through Scripture intends the transformation of His people to Christlikeness and be fully integrated and assimilated into His kingdom life. Every biblical text contributes to this goal. The preacher's search then must be for the biblical text's *transformative vision-intent*.

The search for the biblical text's vision-intent is not simply that of ascertaining what the text is saying and what it is saying about what it is saying—to borrow Robinson's phrase. The search, rather, is for the biblical text's transformative goal. One way this may be accomplished is by imagining the text's ideal state or situation whenever its persuasive goal is achieved in its listeners.

The process of ascertaining the vision-intent in exegesis and sermon preparation is much like the search for the text's "focus" and "function," to utilize Long's

¹⁶George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 3. Kennedy's definition of rhetoric as "that quality of discourse by which a speaker or writer seeks to accomplish his purposes," is applicable to the rhetorical study Scripture. A rhetorical method that relies on the specific persuasive situation between speaker and audience ought not lead one to think that truth is relative. This method simply acknowledges "that norms and values are always already instantiated in particular rhetorical situations." One may say further that without the meeting of speaker and audience in a particular situation, objective truth can never be transformational. It is only when the hearer believes what the speaker says that persuasion meets its goal. David S. Cunningham, "Theology as Rhetoric," *Theological Studies* 52, no. 3 (1991): 424.

terminologies. The search, however, is for the biblical text's rhetoric of transformation—what the text aims to do, and how the text itself seeks to accomplish such goal.¹⁷

This transformative vision-intent may be applied to an expository or a topical sermon. The preaching module the present writer is putting together is essentially a theological construct necessitating a topical series. In this case, the preacher must take great pains in making sure that biblical texts used in support of a topic can, indeed, serve a chosen single transformative goal. In addition, the *means* applied to reaching the sermon's transformative goal must be representative of the texts' vision.

Sermonic Movements

The matter of movements is as fundamental to preaching as its transformative vision-intent. This is so because the quality and intentionality of the sermon's movements could determine whether the sermon's goal is achieved. Fred Craddock expresses this well when he says:

Anyone who would preach effectively will have as a primary methodological concern the matter of movement. Movement is of fundamental importance not simply because the speaker wants to 'get somewhere' in the presentation but because *the movement itself* is to be an experience of the community in sharing the Word."¹⁸

¹⁷For a rhetorical hermeneutic for preaching, see Craig A. Loscalzo, "A Rhetorical Model," in *Hermeneutics for Preaching: Approaches to Contemporary Interpretations of Scripture*, ed. Raymond Bailey (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 105-34; for a brief analysis of a particular rhetorical method as applied to preaching, see Craig A. Loscalzo, "Burke, Burke, Still the Lurk," *Homiletic* 14, no. 2 (1989): 5-8; for an application of rhetorical analysis on a specific scripture passage, see Judette M. Kolasny, "An Example of Rhetorical Criticism: Luke 4:16-30," in *New Views on Luke and Acts*, ed. Earl Richard (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 67-77.

¹⁸Fred B. Craddock, *As One Without Authority: Essays on Inductive Preaching*, rev. ed. (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001), 45. Italics are the present writer's.

Going back to Stott's bridge-building metaphor, the preacher makes her/his way back to the congregation carrying the text-congregation encounter gained from exegesis. The preacher carries the text's claim (rhetorical goal) as s/he crosses back—what the sermon says God intends to do *to* and *with* the congregation. This claim unites in a single transformational vision-intent statement, which serves as the sermon's terminus.

One may envision movement as the recreation of the preacher's text-congregation encounter, through a series of shifts toward the vision-intent statement. Craddock likes to think of movement as the route one takes to the sermon's goal: "The question now is, by what route shall we come to this point?" Whatever moves one decides to utilize, the preacher will want to "sustain anticipation so that, while the trip will not be the same experience for everyone, all will stay to the end."¹⁹

In considering what moves to utilize in a sermon, the preacher does well to note the form a biblical text takes in trying to realize its rhetorical goal. The literary dimensions of a text with its own peculiar rhetorical tools are not incidental decorations. They determine the nature and impact of a text's content—what it is trying to say. The idea is not to slavishly mimic the text's speech-form, but to utilize it as observation points from which to execute one's own strategic moves.²⁰ Thus, as Long observes, the preacher regenerates the text's impact for today's audience: "The preacher's task . . . is not to replicate the text but to regenerate the impact of some portion of that text. He or she must not attempt to say or do everything the text once said and did. Rather the

¹⁹Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 116.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 121.

preacher should attempt to say and do what a *portion* of the text *now* says and does for a new and unique set of people”²¹ (emphasis supplied).

Sermonic moves involve the development of rhetorical strategies for realizing the sermon’s goal. This involves the use of various images for the purpose of bringing into view certain understandings and convictions through the use of association and disassociation.²²

The sermon’s sequential moves come from different places: from the preacher’s own insights of the biblical text, the congregation, and the outside world, which directly or indirectly bear on the sermon’s goal. One area which normally does not make it into sermons are the insights gained from the area of spiritual formation which may shed light on how to accomplish the text’s transformative goal. These can be part of the sermon’s move towards the goal as well. Whatever move the sermon makes, the preacher needs to make sure that the claim of God on the congregation as reflected on the chosen text(s) are presented and heard.

Sermon Series Development

Inherent Difficulties

The first difficulty is that of comprehending Willard’s views on spiritual growth. An analysis of the Willardian Corpus reveals a complete theological-philosophical

²¹Long, *Preaching*, 33.

²²David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures*, Kindle ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), loc., 565; for a synopsis of current theories of rhetoric, see Lucy Lind Hogan, “Rethinking Persuasion: Developing an Incarnational Theology of Preaching,” *Homiletic* 24, no. 2 (1999): 6-8.

framework for spiritual formation. This is not readily apparent, however, for the simple reason that he did not set out to write a treatise on “spiritual theology.” Rather, each of the five books in his corpus addresses either a lack or a positive misunderstanding of the nature of spiritual growth. These are the springboards from which he reveals his views on spiritual formation.

Exacerbating this difficulty is the lack of scholarly engagement with his work.²³ This scarcity, coupled with the present writer’s limited understanding of this area of study, necessitated the studying of other writers’ views on spiritual formation in order to understand Willard’s.

As one follows his work chronologically, one sees elements of his views developing. The development is less sequential or linear as it is unfolding. Elements left underdeveloped in earlier works are developed in later works as each succeeding book necessitated it. Thus, perhaps the best way to conceive of Willard’s views as they are presented in his corpus is to imagine it as the blossoming of a flower.

The second difficulty is that of packaging a sermon series dealing with a subject matter the Fullerton Church members have not been accustomed to hearing. Most (if not all) of the theological foundations for Christian spiritual growth are there for a good Seventh-day Adventist Christian to see. They are not new to him/her. These, however,

²³Porter, “The Willardian Corpus,” 242. He finds this lack of scholarly engagement troubling because those “that tend to leave a lasting mark on theological education within the University, seminary, and the local church are those thinkers, theories, and ideas that get scholarly attention. Scholarly engagement, both positive and critical, generates greater awareness, interest, and (hopefully) deeper comprehension of a particular thinker and his or her points of view.”

have not been pulled together to create a unified understanding of how to achieve Christlikeness.

Series Aim and Sequence

The difficulties described above led the present writer to work towards a topical sermon series. A topical series seems appropriate precisely because of a perceived lack of basic understanding on the nature of spiritual growth. As Willard himself notes,²⁴ Scripture itself does not provide a systematized view on spiritual growth. Evidence must be culled from various passages, systematized then presented to the congregation. Succeeding sermons and sermon series (which are outside the purview of the present study) may then build on the gains made in the initial sermon series.

The general lack of understanding on spiritual growth in the Fullerton Church necessitates a dual focus. The first is establishing a basic theological-anthropological foundation for spiritual growth. What is Scripture's *vision* for character transformation? How does God *intend* to carry out this transformation in the Christian's life? The second deals with the *means* for actualizing Scripture's intent. The series' aim is expressed in the question, "What does the Fullerton Church believer need to *know* and to *do* in order to be inwardly and outwardly transformed into the likeness of Christ's character?"

The first sermon in the series tackles the common misunderstanding among Adventist laity that sin is simply an act which one commits (1 John 3:4). Given Adventism's emphasis on the obedience of faith, this vision is too narrow and could

²⁴Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 350.

potentially lead to behavior modification as a simplistic solution. This sermon's goal is to paint sin as a bodily pathology requiring extensive divine-human effort to overcome.²⁵ Through justification, the guilt of sin was removed. Through sanctification, the damages of sin to human personality are being repaired. This renovation, however, requires human participation.

The second sermon tackles the problem of inconsistent (or nonexistent) obedience to biblical commands to rid one's self of sins (e.g., Col 3:2, 5; Phil 2:13; 1 Tim 4:7). Biblical commands presuppose a basic ability to obey. The answer, however, requires a deeper understanding of sinful habits and how these keep the individual from actualizing in action one's intention to obey. This sermon's goal is to apply Willard's theological anthropology to the problem of obedience. At the heart of one's inability to obey is a will (or heart) entangled by its own desires. If one were to obey, the heart along with all aspects of the self, must be renovated by yoking it with Christ (Matt 11:29-31). Thus, the rationale for the spiritual disciplines is here introduced.

The third sermon expands on the idea of being yoked with Christ. The analogy of two beings yoked together becomes the controlling metaphor of this sermon. If one were to become like Christ in order to fully participate in God's kingdom life, the believer must fully trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Example. The believer must make a shift from understanding salvation as simply "forgiveness" to one of "discipleship." The four basic practices of silence and solitude, study and worship are reinforced and

²⁵Scripture points to three manifestations of sin in human experience: the world (structures of evil), devils (unseen spiritual beings), and the flesh (the body weakened by conflicting sinful desires). See Eph 2:1-3.

deepened—how they serve as the anchors to the exercise of all other disciplines.²⁶

The fourth sermon begins to flesh out Willard's theological anthropology. The will (heart) is the center and driving force of a person. Since it has become weak and confused due to the effects of sin, it must be transformed. To do so requires that the entire living soul—one's thoughts, feelings, body, and social web—be transformed to form a consistently Christlike character. This sermon focuses on the mind: its thoughts (images, concepts, judgments, and inferences) and feelings (sensations and emotions). These must be taught new healthy habits so they can serve as allies of the will in intending and doing what God wants it to.²⁷

The fifth sermon focuses on the body. According to Willard, any talk about character transformation inevitably boils down to how one uses one's body. Will, thoughts, and feelings naturally lead to some bodily action. Moreover, the sinful habits are lodged there. If these habits are to be broken and replaced with new, Christlike habits, one must learn how to control one's body. Since every call for holy living requires bodily action (Rom 6:12-14; 1 Thess 4:3-4, 5:23; Col 2:19; 3:15; 2 Cor 4:10), one must resist the temptation of spiritualizing character transformation. The body, at home in its own sinful habit, have the capacity of thwarting one's intentions. It has its own "body" language and rhythms, which must be replaced with Christlike ones. Here,

²⁶Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 1-10; for Willard's basic treatment of the four basic disciplines, see Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 357-64.

²⁷See chapter 2 of Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, loc. 277-522. Here, he develops his theological anthropology most fully, which forms the basis for his views on spiritual formation.

the four basic disciplines of silence and solitude, study and worship are re-emphasized as necessary means for self-analysis.

The sixth and last sermon focuses on the relational life. Humans are relational beings (Gen 1:26, 2:8). How one relates to others—to God and neighbors—is crucial to one’s transformation. Love for God and for neighbor is the heart of Christian obedience. To be able to love God and neighbor from the depth of one’s being to the use of one’s body is the biblical vision of obedience. Sinful habits of assault must be forsaken. In its place one must learn new habits of love (Rom 12:9-22).

Survey Instrument

The creation of the survey instrument is motivated by one goal: to assess the effectiveness of the sermon series in enhancing the spiritual growth of the survey respondents. To accomplish this goal in part, the present writer is utilizing The Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI),²⁸ developed by Todd W. Hall and Keith J. Edwards. SAI provides a good tool for measuring the respondents’ spiritual maturity pre- and post-sermon series:

The Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) measures an individual’s spiritual development or spiritual maturity from both an object relations and a contemplative spiritual perspective. It is construed on the premise that spiritual maturity is composed of two primary dimensions: (1) the equality [sic] of an individual’s relationship with God and (b) the degree of an individual’s awareness of God in his or her life.²⁹

²⁸Henceforth, SAI.

²⁹Peter C. Hill and Ralph W. Hood Jr., *Measures of Religiosity* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1999), 367; see also Todd W. Hall and Keith J. Edwards, “The Spiritual Assessment Inventory: A Theistic Model and Measure for Assessing Spiritual Development,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42, no. 2 (2002): 341.

The present survey instrument contains a second part called Spiritual Practices Frequency (SPF),³⁰ which assesses how frequently the respondents practice certain spiritual disciplines. The purpose for its inclusion is determine whether there would be a direct correlation between spiritual maturity and the practice of various spiritual disciplines. The present writer derives SPF from Willard's own list of spiritual disciplines. Willard's disciplines of abstinence are: solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, secrecy, and sacrifice. His disciplines of engagement are: study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, and submission.

The present writer has made the modifications to Willard's list in order to accommodate Adventist practices and sensitivities. First, a second type of fasting (named as fasting 2) has been added describing Adventist practice of a healthy lifestyle. Second, Sabbath has been added as a discipline of engagement. Third, chastity has been replaced with simplicity. Fourth, a second type of worship—corporate worship (named as worship 2), has been created to distinguish it from daily experience of worship.

³⁰Henceforth, SPF.

CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE PREACHING MODULE

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

—Apostle Paul, *Philippians 2:12, 13*

Faith is not opposed to knowledge; it is opposed to sight. And grace is not opposed to effort; it is opposed to earning.

—Dallas Willard, *Hearing God*

Implementation of the Preaching Module

Series Preparations

Preparations for the sermon series began in earnest late 2011 with consent from the church board. The church body had been anticipating the series to begin a good four months prior to the start of 2012. The series, however, had to be postponed twice for sundry reasons. As 2012 started, bulletin announcements, invitation cards, posters, and pulpit promotions began in earnest.

On January 7, 2012, two weeks prior to the beginning of the series, the present writer met after the worship service with the children, youth, and adult Sabbath School teachers to coordinate implementation of the pre-series survey. On January 14 as agreed, all adult classes dismissed at 10:25 a.m. and headed to the Sanctuary for instructions. At

10:40 a.m. the survey instrument was handed out with the help of deacons and deaconesses. Adult staff in children and youth Sabbath Schools were handed their packets earlier in the day to fill out on their own.

Series Implementation

On January 21, the same process was repeated to give chance for more individuals to participate in the survey. On the same Sabbath, the sermon series started. The series itself was six sermons long, delivered in six continuous Sabbaths. The series was titled: “Metamorphosis: Transformed In God’s Hand.” The sermon titles were as follows: (1) Sinners Anonymous-January 21, (2) Courage to Shape Up-January 28, (3) Jesus Apprentice-February 4, (4) Transforming the Mind-February 11, (5) Transforming the Body-February 18, and (6) Transforming the Life-February 25.

On February 25, the sermon series concluded. On the same day, the post-series survey was implemented. In order to encourage respondents to complete the post-series survey immediately, a meal was prepared in advance for the entire church. The present writer’s wife and family led in preparations, with the help of church members. The process of getting the post-series survey back lasted three weeks after the sermon series concluded, due to discrepancies with pre- and post-survey codes.

Data Collection

Frequency

Seventy-nine pre-series and eighty-four post-series surveys were collected. One pre-series and six post-series surveys had no codes and thereby could not be matched. The remaining unmatched surveys had such different pre- and post- series codes as to

assume two largely different respondents between the two sets. Of all the surveys collected, fifty-one were matched together. Forty-nine of the matched surveys were valid. Two of the matched samples were invalidated. One had all of the post-series Spiritual Practices Frequency data missing. The other was missing all data for how many sermons had been attended.

Among the 49 valid samples, 21 were male, while 27 were female. Twenty of the respondents were between 18 to 54 and 28 were 55 or above in age. Two samples were missing age designation. Due to the small samples in the six specified age groups as it appeared in the pre- and post-series survey, the age groups were recoded and reduced to only two categories: 18 to 54, and 55 and up. Forty-nine out of 50 marked their ethnicity. Twenty-five out of 50 were Caucasian. No other ethnicity had significant sampling for statistical analysis.

Forty-six attended the first sermon. Forty-three attended the second. Forty attended the third. Forty-one attended the fourth. Thirty-nine attended the fifth. Forty-six attended the sixth and final sermon. Altogether, 95 percent of the valid samples attended an average of four to six sermons.

Clarifications

The pre- and post-series survey instruments were entirely identical, except for check mark boxes appearing at the bottom of the last page of the post-series survey to gauge attendance. The survey instrument itself consisted of two parts taking demographic and attendance aside. The first part, Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI), measured the respondents' spiritual maturity at the start and conclusion of the series. SAI draws insights from object relations and attachment theories. Taken from a

contemplative model of spirituality, SAI integrates relational/emotional with spiritual development. In its present version SAI consists of six sub-scales, viz., awareness, realistic acceptance, disappointment, grandiosity, instability, and impression management. Table 1 explains the basic meaning of each sub-scale.

Table 1. SAI sub-scales explanation

SAI Sub-scales	Explanation
Awareness	Conscious recognition of God's abiding presence in one's life
Realistic Acceptance	Confidence in the strength of one's relationship with God
Disappointment	Dissatisfaction with one's relationship with God
Grandiosity	Inflated sense of one's spirituality in relation with God and others
Instability	Psychological volatility of one's relationship with God
Impression Management	Managing one's perceptions and views about spiritual life

The second part, Spiritual Practices Frequency (SPF), measured the sample population's actual application of key spiritual disciplines in their own lives. The disciplines are taken mostly from Dallas Willard's *Spirit of the Disciplines* with several modifications by the present writer to better fit the audience, as noted in the previous chapter¹. Table 2 below gives the revised list of disciplines from Willard's original list.

¹Henceforth, SAI.

Table 2. Revised list of spiritual disciplines

Willard's Disciplines of Abstinence	<i>Revised List of Disciplines of Abstinence</i>	Willard's Disciplines of Engagement	<i>Revised List of Disciplines of Engagement</i>
Solitude	Solitude	Study	Study
Silence	Silence	Worship	Worship 1 & 2
Fasting	Fasting 1 & 2	Celebration	Celebration
Frugality	Frugality	Service	Service
Chastity	Simplicity	Prayer	Prayer
Secrecy	Secrecy	Fellowship	Fellowship
Sacrifice	Sacrifice	Confession	Confession
		Submission	Submission
			Sabbath

Survey Findings

Restatement of Purpose

As stated in chapter 1, the present study's purpose is to design and implement a preaching module that enhances the spiritual maturity of respondents. Willardian ideas and categories on spiritual formation had given impetus to the content and structure of the sermon series as well as the survey instrument. In the case of the sermons, the present writer extrapolated from such Willardian ideas as the nature of spiritual formation in Christ, the role of human and divine agency, and general methodology for effecting spiritual transformation.

The role of the survey instrument was to gauge whether change or, more aptly, whether spiritual transformation did occur as a result of the preaching module. The role of SAI was to capture a snapshot of the respondents' spiritual maturity at the start of the

series then, with the post survey, gauge which direction change tended to lead—and whether or not it was significant. Similarly, the role of SPF was to gauge the respondents' level of commitment to certain spiritual disciplines, then gauge what kind of change the sermon series effected. The survey's two parts thus supplemented each other.

Data Analysis

T- and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks tests were used to analyze the data. An alpha (α) value for a statistically significant change was assigned a “p” value of $p \leq .05$. A “p” value less than or equal to .05, when rounded to the nearest hundredth's place, is considered a statistically significant positive change.

A T-test paired sample analysis of the SAI portion of the survey shows that a positive significant change occurred in four of the six sub-scales, viz., awareness, disappointment, impression management, and instability. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test also reveals significant change on the same four sub-scales. When the T-Test was applied to the entire sample population, two-thirds showed significant change from statistical point of view. The remaining one-third trended positively, albeit less significantly. This seems to indicate that the preaching module created positive change in the spiritual maturity of the sample population. See table 3.

Table 3. SAI T-test & Wilcoxon signed ranks test comparison on general sample population

SAI Sub-scales	T-test	Wilcoxon
Awareness	.005	0.004
Instability	.024	.018
Impression Management	.026	.035
Disappointment	.041	.054
Grandiosity	.077	.059
Realistic Acceptance	.394	.164

A T-test paired sample analysis of the SPF portion of the survey shows that nine out of the eighteen categories demonstrating statistically significant change. The nine categories are: fasting 1, worship 1, solitude, prayer, silence, worship 2, Sabbath, and study. The remaining nine , viz., secrecy, simplicity, submission, frugality, celebration, service, confession, sacrifice, fasting 2, and fellowship trended positively for change, albeit less significantly. This seems to indicate that the preaching module created positive change in the practices of the eighteen spiritual practices contained in the SPF survey. See table 4.

The T-test paired sample of SPF was further applied to gender and age. In the case of the former, the female sample population (table 5) showed statistically significant change only in three areas, viz., prayer, worship 2, and fasting 1, while the rest trended positively, albeit less significantly. The male sample population (table 6), on the other hand, showed statistically significant change in seven areas, viz., worship 1, secrecy,

submission, service, and fasting 1, silence, and solitude, the rest trended positively, albeit less significantly. See tables 5 and 6.

Sample population aged eighteen to fifty-four showed statistically significant change in eleven areas, viz., worship 2, fasting 1, silence, worship 1, prayer, simplicity, solitude, submission, fasting 2, Sabbath, and study (see table 7). Ages fifty-five and up of the sample population showed statistically significant change in only one area, viz., prayer (see table 8). In both age categories, all the other areas trended positively, albeit less significantly.

Table 4. SPF T-test on the general sample population

Rank	Spiritual Practice	Statistical Significance
1a	Fasting 1	.004
1b	Worship 1	.004
2a	Prayer	.006
2b	Solitude	.006
3	Silence	.008
4	Worship 2	.013
5	Sabbath	.022
6	Study	.025
7	Secrecy	.051
8	Simplicity	.088
9	Submission	.117
10	Frugality	.135
11	Celebration	.185
12	Service	.254
13a	Confession	.261
13b	Sacrifice	.261
14	Fasting 2	.376
15	Fellowship	.533

Table 5. SPF T-test on female sample population

Rank	Spiritual Practice	Statistical Significance
1	Prayer	.009
2	Worship 2	.010
3	Fasting 1	.050
4	Solitude	.067
5	Frugality	.071
6	Sabbath	.090
7	Silence	.094
8	Simplicity	.136
9	Study	.207
10	Worship 1	.265
11	Fasting 2	.340
12	Sacrifice	.416
13	Celebration	.425
14	Secrecy	.476
15	Submission	.611
16	Confession	.649
17	Service	.823
18	Fellowship	.824

Table 6. SPF T-test on male sample population

Rank	Spiritual Practices	Statistical Significance
1	Worship 1	.008
2	Secrecy	.012
3	Submission	.016
4	Service	.025
5	Fasting 1	.029
6a	Silence	.047
6b	Solitude	.047
7	Prayer	.055
8	Study	.057
9a	Sabbath	.096
9b	Worship 2	.096
10	Celebration	.135
11	Sacrifice	.171
12a	Fellowship	.186
12b	Simplicity	.186
13	Confession	.208
14	Fasting 2	.833
15	Frugality	1.00

Table 7. SPF T-test on sample population ages 18-54

Rank	Spiritual Practices	Statistical Significance
1	Worship 2	.002
2	Fasting 1	.005
3	Silence	.007
4	Worship 1	.008
5	Prayer	.009
6	Simplicity	.010
7	Solitude	.012
8	Submission	.017
9a	Fasting 2	.030
9b	Sabbath	.030
10	Study	.049
11	Secrecy	.069
12	Fellowship	.110
13	Sacrifice	.163
14	Frugality	.167
15	Celebration	.204
16	Service	.385
17	Confession	.591

Table 8. SPF T-test on sample population ages 55 and over

Rank	Spiritual Practices	Statistical Significance
1	Prayer	.043
2	Worship 1	.057
3	Sabbath	.058
4	Fasting 1	.073
5a	Solitude	.118
5b	Study	.118
6	Secrecy	.130
7	Silence	.199
8	Worship 2	.212
9	Confession	.230
10	Simplicity	.293
11	Service	.326
12	Sacrifice	.355
13	Celebration	.381
14	Frugality	.512
15	Fasting 2	.611
16	Fellowship	.846
17	Submission	.851

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

—Apostle John, Revelation 14:12

Simply make an inquiry of your own. Ask your church, “What is our group’s plan for teaching our people to do everything Christ commanded?”

—Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*

Summary

T-test and Wilcoxon on SAI demonstrate a significant positive change in four of six sub-scales. The sub-scales are: awareness, disappointment, impression management, and instability. The other two categories showed positive change, but not of statistically significant value. From a pastoral perspective, however, any positive change is of value. This means that the preaching module supports a positive change in the spiritual maturity of the entire sample population.

T-test for SPF shows nine of eighteen categories demonstrating statistically significant positive change (50%). All remaining categories (50%) trended positively for change, but not of statistically significant value. This means that the preaching module supports a positive change in the practices of spiritual disciplines among the sample population.

Statistical analysis revealed two noteworthy incidental findings. The first finding

involves the SPF T-test results for the age category of 55 and over (see table 8). In this age category, the only statistically significant value was prayer. The second finding involves the SPF T-test results for the male gender category *and* ages 18-54 (see tables 6 and 7). These categories have the most number of significant changes: seven and eleven statistically significant changes, respectively. Tables 6 and 7, when considered together, show that a specific sub-population (young males) had the most dramatic change in their personal spiritual maturity and practices of spiritual disciplines with the VIM preaching module.

Conclusion

The aim of the present study has been to create and design a preaching module based on Dallas Willard's vision-intention-means (VIM) approach to spiritual transformation. A concomitant aim was to assess its effectiveness in nurturing the faith of participants from the Fullerton Adventist Church. The present writer has taken Willard's assumption that VIM is the necessary pathway towards spiritual transformation.

The preaching module increased and enhanced the sample population's spiritual maturity and practice of spiritual disciplines. While it may be true to say that every sermon transforms, the strategic use of VIM means that it played a crucial role in the relative success of the preaching module. The VIM module implemented in the present study appropriated Scripture's goal for the believer's transformation and made it its own. It demystified the nature and practice of spiritual growth and provided necessary means. It accomplished these goals through a practical sermon design.

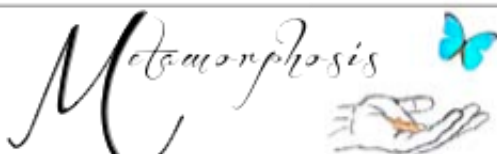
Recommendations

Research Recommendation: In a future study, a larger sample size with a relatively even distribution of ethnicities would be recommended. The sample size dwindled to 48 when complications with pre- and post-sermon survey codes led to quite a few surveys not matching. With 52 percent of ethnicity being Caucasian, the remaining samples could not be statistically analyzed for ethnicity comparisons.

Preaching Recommendation: Incorporate VIM in a multi-year preaching plan with the goal of demystifying the nature and practice of spiritual growth among the church members. One way this could be done is by putting together at least two sermon series every year focusing on an area of spiritual formation.

Pastoral Recommendation: Establish small groups for follow up study on the sermons. This will help the local members grasp the concepts of spiritual formation, which might be new to them.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY INSTRUMENT



Transformed in God's Hand

SPIRITUAL ASSESSMENT INVENTORY & SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FREQUENCY

INFORMED CONSENT

*** *Only adults (ages 18 and above) may participate in this survey****

Title of the Study: *Preaching for Congregational Transformation: A Willardian Vision, Intention, Means Approach to Spiritual Growth and Its Effectiveness in Nurturing the Faith of the Fullerton Seventh-day Adventist Church.* **Purpose:** To design and implement a transformational preaching module utilizing a vision-intention-means pattern; to assess its effectiveness in spurring character formation among respondents. **Procedures:** Survey questionnaire will be implemented immediately prior to the start of sermon series. A six-week sermon series follows. Survey questionnaire will be re-implemented immediately after the sixth and final sermon. Surveys gathered will be analyzed. Findings will be included in chapter five of the present research. **Risks & Discomforts:** None. Survey is non-invasive. **Privacy and Confidentiality:** No attempt will be made to identify the respondents by name. Information gathered from the survey will be closely protected. Only the researcher and a statistician will handle survey information. **Benefits:** Respondents will gain better understanding of the dynamics of spiritual growth and their role in their own character formation. Researcher will gain valuable knowledge in caring for God's flock and facilitating their spiritual growth.

I CONFIRM THAT THE ABOVE INFORMATION HAS BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME SATISFACTORILY. BY FILLING OUT THIS SURVEY, I CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE AS A SUBJECT IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN...

To keep your survey confidential, please create your own code by filling in the three boxes (top right corner above) in this manner:

LEFT - Last letter of your mother's first name

CENTER - Day-of-the-month of your birth (1 thru 31)

RIGHT - First letter of the high school where you graduated

I AM... ☐ M ☐ 18-23 ☐ American Indian
☐ F ☐ 24-40 ☐ Asian
☐ 41-54 ☐ African-American
☐ 55-65 ☐ Hispanic
☐ 66 + ☐ Pacific Islander
☐ Caucasian
☐ Other _____

1. The survey is in two parts. In the first, the 5-point scale is asking for degree of applicability to your actual experience. In the second, the scale is asking for frequency

of practice.

2. Fill in the circle (to the right of each statement) that best represents your *actual* experience--not what you think it *ought* to be.
3. Give the answer that comes to mind first. Don't spend too much time thinking about an item.
4. Give the best possible response even if it does not provide all the information you would like.
5. Do your best to respond to all statements for more accurate analysis of your survey.
6. Some of the statements on *Spiritual Assessment Inventory* consist of two parts as shown:

2.1 There are times when I feel disappointed with God.

2.2 When this happens, I still want our relationship to continue.

Your response to 2.2 tells how true statement 2.2 is for you when you have the experience of feeling disappointed with God described in statement 2.1.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come." (2 Cor. 5:17, ESV)

SPIRITUAL ASSESSEMENT INVENTORY			Not at all true	Slightly true	Moderately true	Substantially true	Very true
Factor	No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
A	1	I have a sense of how God is working in my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D	2.1	There are times when I feel disappointed with God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
RA	2.2	When this happens, I still want our relationship to continue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	3	God's presence feels very real to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I	4	I am afraid that God will give up on me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G	5	I seem to have a unique ability to influence God through my prayers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	6	Listening to God is an essential part of my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IM	7	I am always in a worshipful mood when I go to church.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D	8.1	There are times when I feel frustrated with God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
RA	8.2	When I feel this way, I still desire to put effort into our relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	9	I am aware of God prompting me to do things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I	10	My emotional connection with God is unstable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	11	My experiences of God' responses to me impact me greatly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D	12.1	There are times when I feel irritated at God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
RA	12.2	When I feel this way, I am able to come to some sense of resolution in our relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G	13	God recognizes that I am more spiritual than most people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IM	14	I always seek God's guidance for every decision I make.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	15	I am aware of God's presence in my interactions with other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I	16	There are times when I feel that God is punishing me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	17	I am aware of God responding to me in a variety of ways.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D	18.1	There are times when I feel angry at God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
RA	18.2	When this happens, I still have the sense that God will always be with me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	19	I am aware of God attending to me in times of need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G	20	God understands that my needs are more important than most people's.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	21	I am aware of God telling me to do something.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
U	22	I worry that I will be left out of God's plans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	23	My experiences of God's presence impacts me greatly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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SPIRITUAL ASSESSEMENT INVENTORY			<div>Not at all true</div> <div>Slightly true</div> <div>Moderately true</div> <div>Substantially true</div> <div>Very true</div>				
Factor	No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
IM	24	I am always as kind at home as I am at church.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	25	I have a sense of the direction in which God is guiding me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G	26	My relationship with God is an extraordinary one that most people would not understand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D	27.1	There are times when I feel betrayed by God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
RA	27.2	When I feel this way, I put effort into restoring our relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	28	I am aware of God communicating to me in a variety of ways.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G	29	Manipulating God seems to be the best way to get what I want.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	30	I am aware of God's presence in times of need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	31	From day to day, I sense God being with me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IM	32	I pray for all my friends and relatives every day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D	33.1	There are times when I feel frustrated by God for not responding to my prayers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
RA	33.2	When I feel this way, I am able to talk it through with God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	34	I have a sense of God communicating guidance to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I	35	When I sin, I tend to withdraw from God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	36	I experience an awareness of God speaking to me personally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G	37	I find my prayers to God are more effective than other people's.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IM	38	I am always in the mood to pray.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I	39	I feel I have to please God or he might reject me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	40	I have a strong impression of God's presence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I	41	There are times when I feel that God is angry at me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	42	I am aware of God being very near to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I	43	When I sin, I am afraid of what God will do to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	44	When I consult God about decisions in my life, I am aware of His direction and help.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G	45	I seem to be more gifted than most people in discerning God's will.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I	46	When I feel God is not protecting me, I tend to feel worthless.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D	47.1	There are times when I feel like God has let me down.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
RA	47.2	When this happens, my trust in God is not completely broken.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FREQUENCY			Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
Factor	No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
C	1	I take time to enjoy my life with friends and loved ones.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Co	2	I have a trusted individual or spiritual group with whom I share my weaknesses and spiritual failures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fa	3	I make healthy life choices in terms of rest, diet and exercise.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fa	4	I abstain from food and specific activities for spiritual growth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fe	5	I fellowship with other Christians.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fr	6	I avoid spending money just to ease my pain and give me comfort.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sa	7	I experience Sabbath rest.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sc	8	I am willing to give sacrificially in order to help someone in need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Se	9	I avoid having my contributions or good qualities made known to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sr	10	I devote time serving others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Si	11	I enter into times of silence for my spiritual growth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sm	12	I keep my inner life, manners, and dress simple.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
So	13	I spend periods of time alone with God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
St	14	I set aside time for the study of God's Word.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sb	15	I'm okay with not having my own way every time I'm right.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
W	16	I worship with other Christians on Sabbaths.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
W	17	I remain responsively aware of God's closeness throughout the day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
P	18	I pray for the purpose of communing with God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Please put a check mark beside the sermons you heard the Pastor preach.

- ☐ Sinners Anonymous (January 21)
- ☐ Courage to Shape Up (January 28)
- ☐ Jesus Apprentice (February 4)
- ☐ Transforming the Mind (February 11)
- ☐ Transforming the Body (February 18)
- ☐ Transforming the Life (February 25)

APPENDIX B
SERMON MANUSCRIPTS

Getting serious about sin. Much discussion about sin is an empty exercise in definitions. We define it. And stop there. Take **1Jn 3:4**. Our pet definition. Says sin is an illegal act. A transgression. A crime. But legal language is hard to identify with in real life. No one thinks himself a criminal who now and then drives in the carpool lane with no passenger in tow. Indiscretions, yes. But morally guilty? Yet the genius of 1Jn 3:4 is that it takes a snapshot of sin and says, here's your picture. Caught. Guilty. *Anecdote re. alleged traffic viol. in OC on same Sab. when I had flat tire in hailstorm in AV.* Problem with a snapshot is it doesn't tell what kind of person a repeat offender becomes. With repeated transgressions *sin the act* turns into *sin the malignant pathology*.

Sin the transgression becomes sin the addiction. Addicted to what? To having things your way. Mistrust of God is the foundation of sin. We transgress because we think we know better. Look at a child. Mom says, don't jump on the couch; the child doubles the effort. We seem to be born with the attitude that we know better. And as we get older, it leads us to many dark places; to a defeated life. The three manifestations of sin, according to the Bible are the *world* (structures of evil); the *devil* (unseen evil beings); the *flesh* (the body weakened by conflicting desires). **Ep 2:1-3**. All three have one thing in common: They all think they know better. But the biggest problem is the flesh's addiction to its many desires. **Ja 1:14-15**. It wants what it wants and will seize control of the body to get it. This is what has become of the person whose habitual transgressions has overrun his soul; the video picture 1Jn3:4 does not provide. This is the pitiful condition of the sinner moments before turning. Before crying out for help. This is the man Jesus describes who, despairing of what he has become, beats his chest in agony and pleads for mercy. I don't know what I want. My will is impotent. It has lost control. Have mercy on me, a sinner! This is the woman who, living as if God were not around has ruined her soul. This is she moments before saying: **God—if**

there is a god, save my soul—if I have a soul. This was you. Or to some here now, this IS you.

But most of us have turned to God. Yet we have an unrealistic understanding of what happened to us. Not perfect. Just forgiven. Okay. But like the person who gets his debts forgiven, we rack up new debts. Why? Because we're not perfect, only forgiven? Or Because we haven't learned how to stay out of debt! What truly happens to a person who is forgiven? *The records of sins* erased; *guilty charge* dropped. **Col 2:13-15.** Resulting in a new status: *Justified*. Broken bond mended. Leading to a new relationship: *Reconciled*. **Ro 5:1-2.** Given new vision of a better you. *Regenerated*. **2Co 5:17.**

Now your rehab begins. Part 2 of the story of the prodigal son is still being written. It's your rehab story. Now the habitual sins lodged in your mind, emotions, actions, relationships, and heart must be searched and destroyed. Second phase of your salvation has begun. **Ph 2:12-13**, (*work out: do a thorough job*). **1Ti 4:7**, (*exercise: gymnazo, exercise, discipline*). God and you must search and destroy those desires. Not just starve it. Or manage it. Kill it! Death is God's only metaphor. There are to be no dingleberries dangling on the extremities of our hearts. **Col 3.**

VIM. This is what's missing in Christianity today. The seriousness to deal sin a final blow in the body. To partner with God in eradicating the sinful habits that keep us from growing. We must have a *vision* of what we can become. We must *intend* to change. We must use whatever biblical *means* available. Look at the AA's Twelve Step Program. I am Joe Blow: I am recovering from the sin internet pornography. I am Jane Doe: I am recovering from the sin of "acquisition therapy." I am Juan de la Cruz: I am recovering from the sin of navel-gazing. Sinners Anonymous.

A message in lobby of Myer Hall: Gentlemen, you are precious in God's eyes. Shape up! Railed on it. Crude. Rude. Simplistic. Biblical. Should I repeat? Will you run me out of town? See you next Sabbath.

Shape up! is a biblical mandate. The banner at Meier Hall: Gentlemen, You are precious in God's Eyes. Shape Up! Sounds brusque and arrogant. Perfunctory. Insisting on immediate obedience. Pull yourself up by your bootstraps! Get with it! At the least, they indicate that we have a definite role in our own transformation. Co 3:2, 5, 12; Ph 2:13; 1Ti 4:7. These commands mean nothing if they do not presuppose our basic ability to respond. Command an untrained dog to sit and you're wasting your breath. Commanded my dog to sit. He won't. So I said, Don't sit. And he didn't. But we're not untrained dogs. Or trained dogs. We are capable of interacting with biblical commands. So why aren't we shaping up? Why are we entangled in sins?

Shaping up is never only about shaping up. If you've tried losing weight, Or an exercise program, You know that shaping up takes more than will power. It also requires understanding. If you wish to take care of your body—your soul—you must understand it. *Understanding is the basis of care.* If you are to disentangle yourself from sins, you must understand how seriously sin has become part of your habits. Part of your character.

How are sinful habits formed? By repeatedly thinking, feeling, and doing things in a dark corner. On your own. Far away from God. If you wish to break these sinful habits, you must begin to think, feel, and act as though God were actually with you all the time. Not looking to see if you're naughty or nice, but transacting with you as you go through your day. Not an exercise in artistic imagination but in awareness. Theologically we believe that God is present. But experientially, we think he's in heaven. To break sin's hold on the flesh, you must break its deepest dimension of *self-reliance*. To break it, you must become accustomed to being with God all the time. We are so accustomed to thinking, feeling, and doing things on our own that we assume we know what we're doing. Yet we fail the deepest form of sin is one where the person committing it does not even know it. Because self-reliance has become not only a sinful habit but a character trait, we are ill-

equipped to shape up. We don't know how to transact our will with God's will in the actual process of decision-making. We are pulled by our various desires. By our moods. Here today. There tomorrow. This is the biggest reason we don't shape up. The other is that we think that shaping up has nothing to do with our salvation. Incidental. A legal transaction. No bearing on character transformation.

Take a look at how sin infects the entire person. (Slide) To do so, we must understand how we as persons are constituted. There are six basic aspects in our lives as individual human beings that make up our 'human nature.' **Thought** (images, concepts, judgments, inferences); **Feeling** (physical and emotional sensation); **Will** (decision, character); **Body** (action, interaction, with the physical world); **Social** context (personal and structural relations to others); **Soul** (the factor that integrates all of life). The ideal of the spiritual life is one where all of the parts are organized around God. However, each dimension has become a source of weakness due to the habits already formed into character. The will (heart)—the center and driving force of a person—taken out of its element (never designed to stand alone but to function alongside God's will) must now deal with the sinful habits lodged in the soul. Too weak to stand alone yet accustomed to standing alone, the will becomes confused. The will is entangled and enslaved to its own desires—the many things we have set our hearts to follow. The will is hypnotized by its own desires so that we no longer act rationally. We enter a state of *selective insanity* where sins are rationalized away rather than identified, confronted and eradicated. **Ja 1:14-15; 4:1-3.**

What is the way out? We must have the *vision* to change. We must *intend* it. We must use whatever biblical *means* to get it done. Starts by re-envisioning salvation as getting yoked with Christ. The heart set free by grace cannot remain wild. It must be shaped and formed into Christlikeness. **Mt. 11:29-31. Anecdote: Tesfa's explanation of being yoked. (Slide)**

VISION. We've reached the halfway point on our quest for our character transformation. Let's retrace our steps. In *Sinners Anonymous* we painted a biblically realistic view of sin: A malignant pathology infecting the entire person. Sin is not just an act but a condition resulting from repeated disobedience. It's not just what you've done. It's what you've become in your habit; in your character. Even in the person already embraced by God, sinful habits exist which must be searched and destroyed. In *Courage to Shape Up* we said that shaping up takes much more than will power—and behavior modification. The heart—the source of all actions; the driver's seat of the person—is sick; weak; confused; enslaved to its own desires. **Mk 7:21-23; Jer 17:9, 10** It needs to be healed and restored to goodness so that it can consistently obey.

The answer? Yoke it with Christ. **Mt 11:29, 30** To remove the automatic responses we've developed against the kingdom of God. To free the apprentice of domination to his old habitual patterns of thought, feeling and action. The goal is not primarily behavior modification but the healing and transformation of the heart. **Mt 12:34b, 35** In this, Jesus is our only chance. **Jn 15:5**

INTENTION. But we must intend our transformation. My Havilah is still wishing Xmas hasn't ended. Dad, can it be Xmas again? *No, my love, we have to wait for it to come around again.* But Dad, can't we go there? Thought about it. How right she is. Transformation is not a legal holiday you wait for. It is a kind of existence you can enter with Christ if you wish it. But you have to want go there if you are to get there. It will not be done for you. You must plead for mercy over your condition like the father of a tormented boy who goes to Jesus. You must believe that the person you are yoked with knows what he's doing. You must put your complete trust in him. Believe what he believed. Do what he did. No selective picking and choosing.

MEANS. For you to grow, three things must happen: **1st** you must ask the HS to enter you mind and soul and be your constant companion on your search and destroy missions. **2nd** you must accept that the daily events of your life **are** the testing grounds for your growth. It is not the next big event you must worry about. It is the event you're in now—big or small. Your daily events. There is no mid-term or final test. Only daily tests. This means that brushing your children's teeth as they're bouncing off the walls is just as important of a test to your growth as handling your frustrations with your spouse's behavior—or your dog's behavior. **3rd** you must decide to enter Jesus' own practices and firmly decide to make it your own. This is the only way you will become like him. We have too many bookish disciples.

What are Jesus' basic practices? There are four. Two we shall call his practices of abstinence—solitude and silence. Two are his basic practices of engagement—study and worship. All his other practices are founded on these four.

(Read Solitude & Silence). By engaging in these, you create a buffer zone between you and your habitual patterns. You begin to recognize them. Recognizing them, you begin to replace them with new ones. Most of all, you're becoming familiar and comfortable being with the person with whom you are yoked. You find out that when you're alone, you're never truly alone. Thus, you learn to lean on God and trust him in your deepest self, which translates to strength of character in the outer life.

(Read Study & Worship). With study and worship, we fully engage the mind—which is where the inner life fully resides. It includes thoughts, emotions, will. **Ro 12:2** All four practiced persistently and pervasively will begin to create deep changes. **(Extend to the rest of the practices as time allows)**

Mt 7:21-23 Why so harsh? What's the deal? The deal is that those that believed yet did become yoked with Jesus were not transformed in character. If you think being yoked with Christ is too hard, imagine the cost of being free and wild.

VISION. The key to our transformation is the heart. It is sick. **Je17.9** Given to its many desires **Ja4.1**. But it can be healed and transformed. It can be restored to simplicity **Mt6:22**. To obedience. But we must guard it **Pr4.23** and strengthening it **Mt26.41**. To do the one thing **Mk12.30, 31**. ***Three Sabbaths ago***, I introduced to you a schema (model) for understanding the self. I want to deepen it today. We begin with the most basic biblical description **Ge2.7**. The living soul is that lump of clay infused with life by God's creative breath, packaged into a unified physical body. The living soul is like a fabric with interlacing threads of physical and non-physical elements. Each part intricately woven with the others. Inseparable. But we must separate it to understand how it works.

MEANS. *Let me explain.* a) The *heart* or *will* is your nerve center from which all your actions and interactions originate. b) *Thoughts* are the images, concepts, judgments, and inferences that permeate your mind. c) *Feelings* are your sensations and emotions. d) *Body* is your physical structure from which you act and interact with the physical world. e) *Social web* are your personal and structural relationships. g) *Character* is who you've become as a result of the constant exercise of your will. h) *Actions* are your deeds, which originate from the heart/will. None of these are distinct from each other. Rather, they act symbiotically. The condition of one is directly tied to the condition of the others. Actions, while they originate from the heart, are never only the function of the heart. For the heart is dependent on the habits of thought and feeling. Of bodily habits. Of the webs of social relationships you keep. Each has a will of its own. Each (or together) can skew the heart to make irrational, sinful decisions. **Scripture says that the mind must be transformed** if we are to discern what is right; what is God's perfect will in everyday life. How? Sacrifice—the most painful of all disciplines. The entire body with all its life must be sacrificed to be renewed. It will be painful. Foremost, the mind must be taught to think and feel in

distinctly new and better ways. Better than the world's **Ro12.1, 2** (*μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε, do not live according to the pattern of; τῇ ἀνακαινώσει, by the renewing [i.e. to cause the mind to become distinctly new and better]*). By molding the mind after Christ's **Ph2.5-10**. To make the mind a good servant of the heart, the mind must subordinate itself to the will. **Where do you begin?** Oddly enough, it begins in your study. To work hard and diligently in learning the big ideas and images that moved Christ to action, making it your own. To feed the mind with the same information Christ fed his. To train the mind to read and interpret situations correctly and apply appropriate, sane, rational action commensurate to the situation. This is what it means to study **2Ti2:15**. Discernment. The ability to judge well and make good decisions. A mind that can think straight is a tremendous ally of the will. With discernment and humility, it can be reasoned with. **But the mind does not only think.** It also feels. Sensations, desires, emotions. Many of which are destructive. *Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me.* Lie! Feelings play a big part in the way we think. It motivates us to act. It colors our action. Chaotic feelings cause erratic behavior **Ja4.1-2, 3.6**. Destructive feelings can creep into every area of life like dye or yeast. **How to address it?** a) Address the condition that give rise to destructive feelings. *A woman took in the thought that she's treated unfairly by husband, boss. Rather than addressing underlying cause, she broods. Gives birth to feelings of injustice, outrage. Becomes morose. Body language. Friends stoke feelings. Empowered. Feelings become her lens. Now I see clearly. I am free. Actually, she has become a prisoner.* b) Work on strengthening mind. Healthy thoughts create healthy feelings. So you can walk away **Co3.8-11**. c) Dwell on the good things **Ph4.8**. d) Desire *faith* (confidence based on reality), *hope* (anticipation of good yet to come), *love* (will to good) **Ga5.22, 23**. With it *joy* (*pervasive sense of well-being—first line of defense*) and *peace* (absence of inner strivings—panic). ***Ad lib to end.***

VISION. Last week, we noted **Ro12:2**. We noted two phrases **Ro12.2 slide**. We said: That mind consists of *thoughts* and *feelings* **M1**. That thoughts & conditions give rise to feelings **M2**. That feelings must be subordinated to thoughts **M3**. That distinctly new and better patterns of thinking must spread across the mind if it is to be renewed. **RM** That the mind must begin to bear the fruit of the Spirit: *Faith* (trust and confidence in God and neighbor) **He11.1**; *Hope* (anticipation of good yet to be realized) **Ro5.4**; *Love* (will to do others good) **1Co13.4-8a**. *Joy* (pervasive sense of well-being) **Ja1.2**; *Peace* (rest of the will, the absence of fear) **Jn14.27**.

To be like Christ, we must think like Christ. Yet thinking is not enough. Good intentions, right thoughts, and joyful feelings must consistently find their way to bodily actions if character is to be transformed. Only consistent actions form good character. Yes, the heart (will) must be given fully to God; the mind must be renewed. But if the body is not willing to go along, all the good intentions mean nothing **Mk14.38**. The body must be the center of our sacrifice to God **Ro12.1**.

MEANS. How do we transform the body?

1st *Realize that spiritual transformation boils down to the use of the body.* There is a tendency to elevate transformation to the purely spiritual (non-physical); to the level of the mind. Yet, our primary exposure to our surroundings is through the physical body. Consider temptations, the matter of being inclined to do what is wrong. Where do those inclinations primarily reside? In the physical senses of the body. The habits of sins that are lodged in the mind find their way to different parts of the body. No transformation is complete if it is only spiritual. It must also be bodily. Physical. The other extreme is to treat transformation as predominantly physical. We see both in the church. **Cassidy vs. Mara. 1Co 6.13-20** (b temple of HS).

Ro 6:12-14 (do not present your b as instruments of unrighteousness). **1Th 4.3-4** (control his own b in holiness). **1Th 5.23** (may your whole spirit and soul and b be kept blameless). **Co**

2.19 (b nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments. . . with a growth that is from God). **Co 3.15** (put to death. . . let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. . . called in one b). **2Co 4.10** (always carrying in the b the death of Christ).

2nd Teach the body a new kin of bodily language. If we are to be transformed into Christlikeness, we must pay attention to the tendencies of our bodily parts—hands, feet, shoulders, eyebrows, loins, tongue, overall posture. For these parts can trap and ensnare us. This means periodically checking how your body acts against your will. How your body thwarts your good intentions. And then intend to change them. This is where Jesus' foundational practices of solitude & silence; study and worship become crucial **4FP**. The body acts independently and contrary to your intentions because it often follows the subconscious. Habits. Solitude & silence give you the necessary space to identify them. Study & worship give you the chance to know God and yourself. The more you see God's goodness, the more you see your sins. We Adventists are good at studying the end times. We are terrible at studying ourselves. For us to become persons of good character, the body must be taught new bodily language and new bodily actions. These determine the quality of one's life and of one's relations to others.

3rd Teach the body new rhythms and disciplines. This is where Jesus' practices become crucial in the transformation of the body. Every practice of abstinence and engagement Jesus partook in his life are bodily disciplines. They involve the body. They center on the body. How do these disciplines help break the sinful habits lodged in the different parts of the body? Let's take look **PX**.

Bo the Sabbath-keeping Ox. This is what it means to change the body.

VISION. We have finally come to the end of our journey. When we started six weeks ago, we set out to understand what it takes to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. (1) We first set out to deepen our understanding of sin. We took a snapshot of sin. Then we asked ourselves, what happens when we take a video camera and record a lifetime of disobedience? Sin then describes not just what we've done, but what we've become. (2) We then took a deeper look at ourselves and realized that sin has infected all areas of life. Sinful habits are lodged in our souls, which requires new strategy to defeat—getting yoked with Christ. (3) We then identified Jesus' different practices as the means to achieving victory. (4) Then we turned to the mind—the realm of our thoughts and feelings. These must be renewed if we are to be transformed. (5) Then to our physical body. Every sinful habit finds its way to the different parts of the body. Which means the body must be taught new rhythms and disciplines. (6) Today, we turn to the last area of our schema: the relational life. Any talk of character transformation fails if it ignores the physical body and how it is utilized in relating to others. We are relational beings **Ge1.26, 2.18**. Our transformation is also relational **Mk12.28-31**.

Love is the will to good. It is inherently relational. But we have learned how not to be loving. The heart, weakened by sin has grown cold. It does not always will the good of others no matter the situation. Along life's way—through a combination of inborn sinful tendencies, willful sinning, and being sinned against—we have learned habits of *assault*, calculated to harm. This is the primary evil relationships via attack and withdrawal. **{3 Fundamental of Rel; 3 Sinful Rel Tendencies}** Being sinned against is a terrible thing. It does terrible things to an individual. But these individuals cannot be parented by others who are not their physical parents. Only God can parent. The church cannot. Your wife cannot. Your husband cannot. Your brother or sister cannot. *Anecdote: My brother's failure to be our mother.*

The most basic forms of assault are stipulated in the Ten Commandments. Against God. Against your neighbors. If we are to will the good of others, and murder, adultery, theft, misrepresentation harm them. Jesus deepens these. His aim is to make us see that through dependence in him, we can be transformed into radically good individuals. That it is possible to always will the good of people and situations. To love even when you are being harmed **Mt5.21, 27, 31 33, 38, 43**.

This is the biblical vision of a transformed life.

MEANS. O, but how far we are from it! It's like the bumper sticker that says: Give peace a chance. But the one crying out for is anything but peaceful. We must become persons of peace to give peace a chance. But there is a gap. We talk peace but don't know peace. Why? Because we haven't become peaceful persons.

What does a transformed relational life look like? And how do we get there? **1st:** The transformed life is one where the person who is in Christ has given up assault as a means of responding to rejection and being sinned against, and have replaced it with consistent patterns of loving actions. The biblical vision is clear **Ro12.9-22**. **2nd:** The transformed life is one where Jesus' disciplines are practiced so persistently and patiently that these have birthed new and better character traits. To make Rom 12 a reality, we must put on Christ. To put on Christ, we follow what he said and do what he did. Look at how the disciplines free you. *Ad lib.* **3rd:** The transformed life is one where Jesus' presence transfers from theology to actual experience **Jn10.30, 17.32; EGW2**. God must come down from his throne in your own imagination. He must begin to walk and talk with you in the highways and byways of your life. How do you do this? By stopping at certain moments of the day specifically to sense his nearness. His presence.

And so we end our journey here. May the Lord bless you as you increasingly become like His Son.

APPENDIX C
SERMON HANDOUTS

Jesus' Practices of Abstinence

Two Primary Practices

1) Solitude. Extended periods of time away from human contact and alone with God. By being physically alone with God, we confront the obscure social patterns, internal forces, and conflicts lodged in our habits that escape our attention when we're too busy interacting with others. *Mt 4:11-14; 23, 17:1; Mk 9:2*

2) Silence. Regular times of physical silence and internal quietness achieved primarily by not talking and by closing off of the soul to human noise and words. It is the twin sister of solitude. Silence is vital to making solitude real. Solitude is needed to making silence complete. Over time, physical silence turns into a persistent character of quietness even in the midst of chaos, calamities, and crises—evidence of trust in God. *Mt 26:63, 27:13, 14*

3) Fasting. Abstaining in some significant way from food and possibly drink for a period of time. It reveals how much our peace depends on the pleasures of eating; how much we use food to soothe and placate our desires. When one fasts, sinful attitudes and desires rise to the surface. Regular fasting teaches the disciple not only to confront these but to also depend on God to keep us alive through other means besides physical sustenance. *Mt 4:1, 17:21; Mk 9:29; cf. 1Co 7:5; 2Co 6:5*

4) Frugality. Refraining from using money or goods which God has already given at our disposal simply to soothe and gratify our desires for status, glamour, luxury, or the easing of emotional pain. Extravagant lifestyle corrupts the heart and causes behavioral tendencies that can destroy and render the disciple's witness ineffective. *Mt 19:24; Mk 10:25; Lk 9:58, 18:24, 25; Mt 13:22; 8:20*

5) Simplicity. The persistent practice of ensuring that the inner life remains simple, unadorned, and singularly focused on God. This is then extended to the outer life—one's

manners, speech, dress, social relations, use of gadgets and resources, etc. It devolves into legalism when the outer life of simplicity is absent in the inner life. By valuing this practice in the inner and outer life, we guard our hearts from being entangled with the sins of consumerism and materialism. It gives our hearts the chance to learn to serve only one master—God. *Lk 16:13, 6:20, 24, 9:58; Mt 6:21, 19, 19:16-22; 8:20; cf. 1Pe 3:3*

6) Secrecy. The persistent practice of refraining from causing one's good works, qualities, and contributions to be known, even taking steps to ensure they are not known—if it doesn't involve deceit. By losing or taming our hunger for fame, self-justification, or attention, we guard our hearts from becoming duplicitous or deceitful. We learn to love being unknown. We accept the risk of being misunderstood. By valuing it, we say to others and to ourselves that our peace, joy, and sense of purpose do not depend on what others think of us. In secrecy, we let God be our public relations officer. *Mt 6:1-4, 23:5*

7) Sacrifice. The persistent practice of giving away what is dear to one's heart to the point where it hurts. Abraham gave up Isaac. The widow in Jesus' parable, gave her two mites—all she had. God gave up his Son. Sacrifice teaches the heart to trust God in the dark. It means that we forsake the security of meeting our own needs in order to follow God. We step into the dark alleys of life fully believing that God will bear us up in his own time, in his own way. *Lk 21:2-4; Jn 3:16, 15:13*

(Sermon 3—Jesus Apprentice)

Jesus' Practices of Engagement

Two Primary Practices

1) Study. The persistent practice of engaging the mind with the written and spoken Word of God. It is the direct counterpart of solitude. Solitude teaches us to be comfortable being alone with God; study teaches us to see who he is and how he works in the world. It involves intense repetition (memorization, recitation), concentration, comprehension, and reflection. A mind strengthened by constant study of the Word becomes a good ally of the heart in making sane and rational decisions, and a safeguard against rampaging, irrational feelings and desires. *Jn 8:32; Lk 2:41-52, 24:25-27*

2) Worship. Study's twin sister. As the mind abides in study we begin to see how good, loving, beautiful, and great God is. Thoughts and feelings then join hands with body, heart, and soul to ascribe glory, honor, and praise to God. It is the natural completion of study. Transformational study engages not only the mind's thoughts, but also the mind's emotions. The mind fully engaged in this manner is met by God and results in worship. Study without worship devolves into dry scholasticism. Worship without study devolves into emotionalism. *Mt 11:25; Jn 4:23, 24, 12:28*

3) Celebration. The persistent practice of appropriately enjoying one's life because it is an expression of God's goodness and grace. The disciple who has met God in worship will celebrate life simply and frugally. It is the completion of worship. By valuing it, we teach our hearts to be joyful and never to give in to despair. *Jn 15:11; Lu 4:18, 19; Mt 11:19*

4) Service. The persistent practice of advancing the good of others, including God's cause. It is an excellent way of keeping our hearts from arrogance, possessiveness, envy, resentment, or covetousness. To live as a servant is the greatest challenge to Jesus' disciple for it teaches us that the path to greatness is in servitude. *Mt 20:25-28*

5) Prayer. The persistent practice of conversing and communicating with God. As we grow in it, we are able to invoke God's presence in every action we do. It is the one practice that accompanies all the other practices. It can only be firmly established in our lives if accompanied by such disciplines as solitude, fasting, study, and worship. *Mt 6:9-13; 14:23; Mk 14:38*

6) Fellowship. The persistent practice of joining with other believers in worship, study, prayer, celebration, and service. No one *can* stand alone. Because the gifts of the Spirit are distributed to separate members of the body of Christ, we must bond together to be strong and united. This teaches the heart to never stand alone. *Lk 6:12-17; 23:55; cf. Acts 2:42*

7) Confession. Fellowship's little sister. As we get to know each other in fellowship, we begin to trust others to know our deepest weaknesses and failures. We lay down the burden of hiding and pretending and start being vulnerable and accountable creating a community where confession and forgiveness are the norm. *Jn 13:14, 34, 15:12; Mt 18:21-35; cf. James 5:16*

8) Submission. The highest form of fellowship. With fellowship, submission becomes possible. It is the persistent practice of humility, honesty, transparency, confession and restoration. It functions not as an iron hierarchy but as mutual accountability. It teaches the heart to yield one's right and forsake the desire of always getting one's own way. *Jn 13:14, 34, 15:12; cf. Eph 5:21; 1Pe 2:18; cf. Mt 5:39, 44*

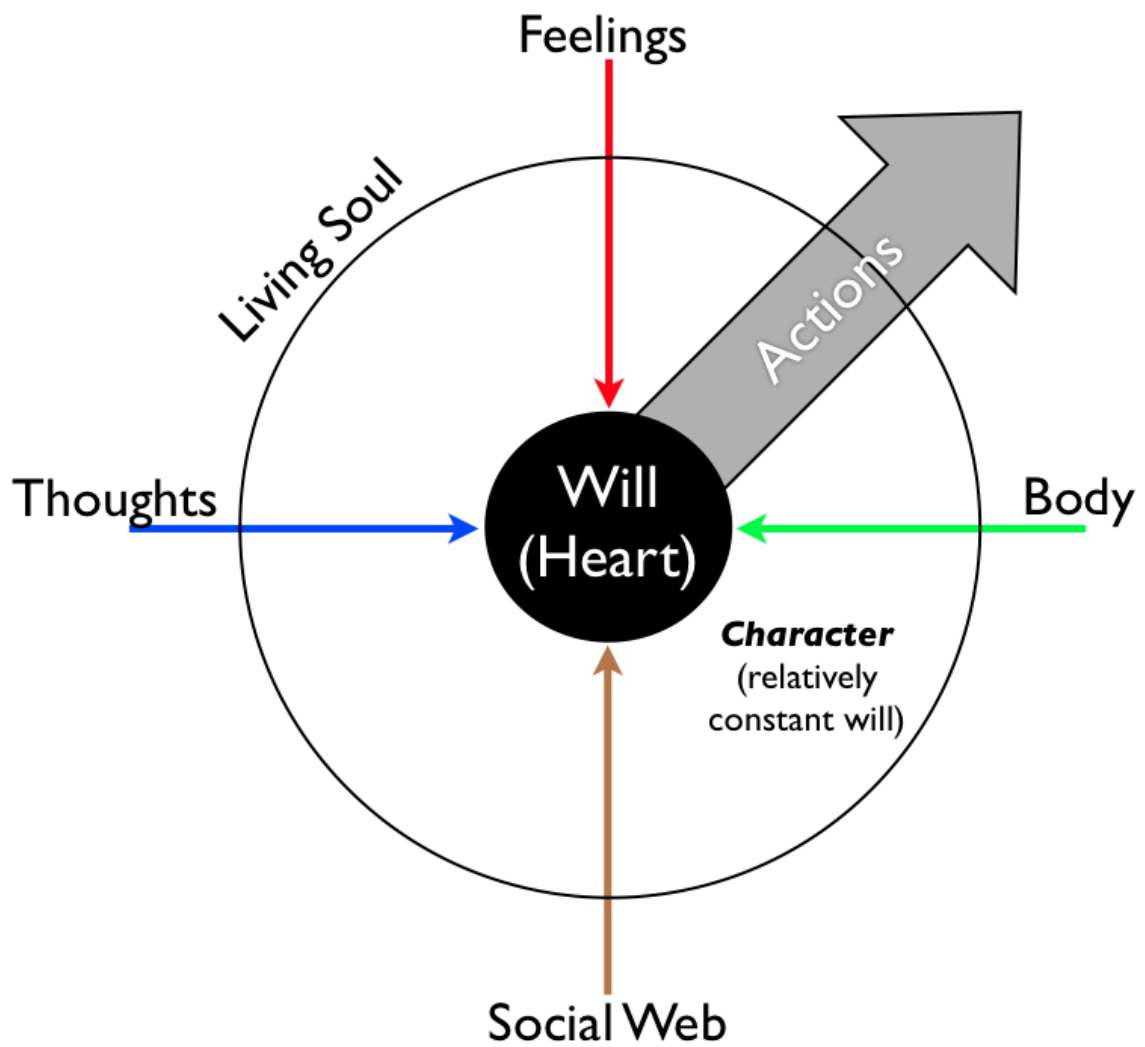
9) Sabbath Rest. The persistent practice of desisting from commerce and normal life traffic on the seventh day in order to engage the entire self in the pursuit of God. It is the queen of all disciplines since it binds them all into one weekly experience of freedom. It measures our trust in God. It reminds us that our worry over work; our persistence in making and spending are indications of continued bondage to fear and the desires of the flesh. *Lk 4:16, 23:56; cf. Heb 4:8-11*

The Romans 12 Christian

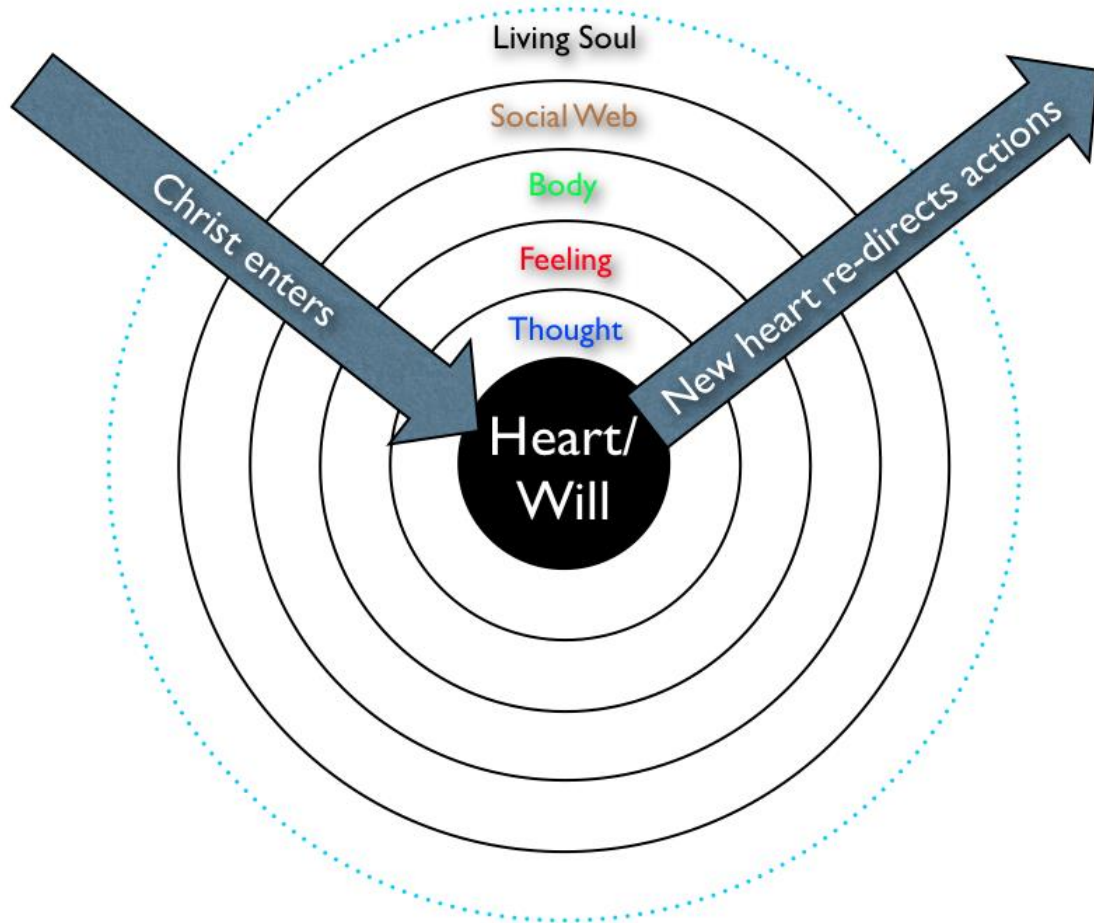
(Romans 12:9-22)

Verse	Qualities	What Jesus Says
9	Loves the same way (in thought and in action).	Mt 5:44; 1Co 13
9	Hates evil (so much as to keep far away from it).	Mt 5:30, 18:8; Mk 9:45
9	Clings to what is good.	Mt 5:16
10	Affectionately devotes him/herself to the church community (as to close blood relatives).	Jn 13:34
10	Prefers to give honor to others than to him/herself.	Lk 14:7-11(cf. Phil. 2:3)
11	Puts heart and soul into serving God.	Mk 12:30
12	Rejoices in hope (does not let the troubles of the moment cloud his/her view of the unseen or the eternal).	Jn 6:22
12	Patient in trouble.	Lk 18:5
12	Constantly devoted to prayer.	Mk 14:8
13	Contributes to the needs of the saints.	Mt 25:35-40
13	Pursues hospitality as a way of life (not as sporadic acts).	Mt 25:35-40
14	Blesses those who pursue with evil intent, refusing to cursing them.	Mt 5:44; Lk 6:8
15	Shows sympathy under all circumstances (rejoices and weeps with those who rejoice and weep).	Jn 2:1-11; Jn 11:35
16	Living in harmony with each other.	Mk 9:50; Jn 17:11
16	Is not arrogant, choosing instead to associate with the lowly ones in one's church community and outside of it.	Lk 19:1-10
16	Does not see him/herself as wise.	Lk 14:7-11(cf. Phil. 2:3)
17	Does not repay evil for evil.	Luke 6:35
17	Has foresight to see and give due regard for what everyone takes to be right (in order not to unnecessarily offend and stir up hostility).	Mt 4:13
18	Lives in peace with everyone regardless of whether others do.	Mk 9:50
19	Does not take revenge but lets God to take whatever action He chooses.	Mt 5:38-42
20	Provides for his/her enemies' needs.	Mt 5:43-45
21	Is not overwhelmed by evil, but overwhelms evil with good.	Mt 5:43-45

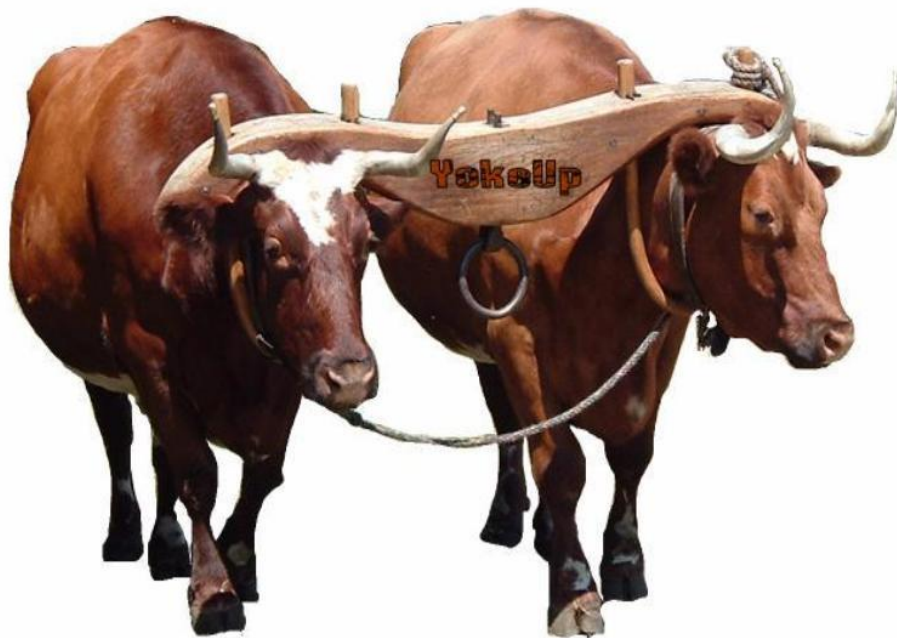
The Human Heart



The New Heart



Yoked with Christ



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